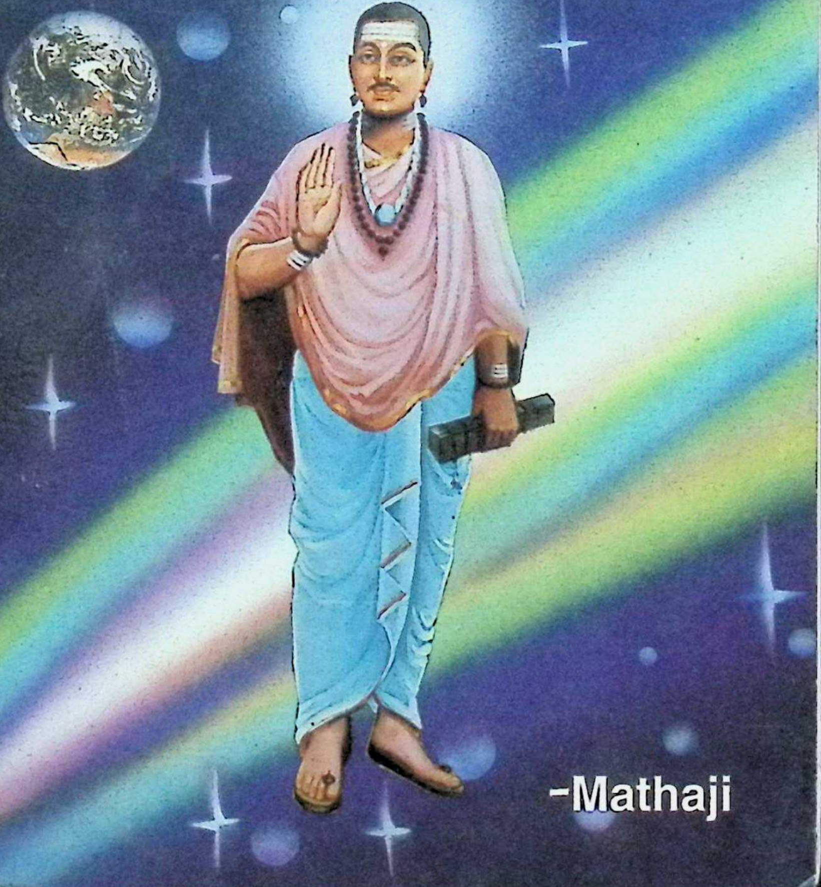
SRI BASAVESWARA

Beacon of the Universe



-Mathaji

|| Om Sri Guru Basavalingaya Namaha ||
86666
Suyidhana Sugrantha Maale's 104th Publication

SRI BASAVESWARA

Beacon of the Universe

by
H.H. Jagadguru Maata Mahadevi

Translated into English
by
D.P. Prakash

Viswakalyana Mission
2035, Basava Mantapa
20th Main, 2nd Block
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Foreward

Many people were asking about a book on Basavanna, written in a simple and lucid form. While translations of epic contain shades of obscurantism, the writings of modernists are of extreme dialectics. A common reader chafes at both these extreme approaches. In order to quench the thirst of a common reader to know about Basavanna, I began writing on Basavanna's life in "Kalyana Kirana"- a monthly Kannada theosophical magazine, from April 1979 and completed in Apr. 1980. Now, these 12 articles in series compiled, are being published as a book.

I wrote these articles when I was tied-up with a busy schedule of work and tours. Even there after, I could neither edit nor revise them. This book is, some what, a reminiscence of what Basavanna had said "I sing the way I please, the way I feel", as I have written how I was inspired. I have an ambition of writing a comprehensive novel (on the line of my other work -TARANGINI) on Basavanna in the near future and I am sure the present book will serve as a synopsis.

I am very much aware that a multifaceted personality of Basavanna, as a revolutionary, a seer, a mystic, a visionary, a free thinker, a poet, a composer and a social reformer cannot be depicted in a small book like this. But still, I have made an attempt to show an elephant in a small mirror.

It is indispensable that every one should know about the life and work of Basavanna. Parents should understand that there is an immense need to make their children know about Basavanna's life, achievement and message. My best wishes to all eager readers.

Camp. Bangalore **Jagadguru Maata Mahadevi**
Date. 14.4.1980

Foreword to English Edition

I am extremely happy to present this book Sri Basaveswara-beacon of the universe, written by me in Kannada and translated into English by Sri.D.P.Prakash.

All India Fifth Basava Dharma Conference is organised in Red Fort Main Ground, Delhi on 18th, 19th and 20th of October 1997 to commemorate the Eighth Centenary year of Sri Basaveswara's Lingaikya (to become one with God). In the context of Golden Jubilee celebration of India's independence the respective conference is conducted in Delhi, the capital city of our country. The present book is going to be released in this conference.

Sri. D.P.Prakash is a brilliant translator, writer and a fluent speaker as well. His translation is in simple and lucid language and honestly, my thoughts and feelings have been conveyed. My first edition was published in 1980. Afterwards the book has been revised based on plenty of historical and literary sources available. So, the sixth Kannada Edition released in 1996 which is more perfect, is the source book for the respective English edition. Whole heartedly I convey my blessings to Sri D.P.Prakash for his translation work and to Ms. K.R.Mangala and Sri.N.Puttarudra for rendering their help to Sri. D.P.Prakash in his translating work.

New Delhi **Jagadguru Maata Mahadevi**
8-10-1997

Translator's note

Mankind has been educated by some of the greatest revolutions in the world. If we reckon the importance of these revolutions in all the spheres of human activities, Revolution in Kalyana gets the top slot as it is all pervading in its effect. Basavanna, as an architect of this revolution, has left an abounding source of knowledge and his preachings and achievements are not bounded by any time and geographical extensions. But unfortunately, it is sad to note that these messages have not crossed the boundaries of Karnataka. If these can transcend the geographical boundaries, and reach the hearts of every humanbeing, it is sure that there will be an overall development in the society. When the society is crumbling under the vast magnitude of corruption, communal violence, inequality, exploitation of women and poverty, Basavanna's preachings have to be made available to each and every individual. Therefore, I deem that the translation of this work on Basavanna is an opportunity to render my humble service to the saviour of the mankind. Equally, I am immensly happy to translate a book penned down by an eminent writer, philosopher, guide and moreover a free thinker Her Holiness Matha Mahadevi. If the non-Kannada readers can have, after reading this book, even a partial idea of the multifaceted personality of Basavanna, I feel, my efforts are more than rewarded.

I record my gratitude to H.H. Mataji, for entrusting, with implicit faith in my humble abilites, the work of translating this book to me.

I am greatful to Mr. N. Puttarudra & Ms. K.R. Mangala for their untiring helping hand throughout this venture.

Bangalore. **D.P. Prakash**
02-10-97.

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GENEROUS DONOR

Active participation and devotion

Sharana B. Jayadev and Sharane Nirmala

There is a quotation of a free thinker that the fortunes of a man sleeping sleeps, standing stands, walking walks and running runs.

Sharana Jayadeva who has adopted the above quotation in its right earnest has always rendered his physical exertion to earn for self as well as for the soceity.

By contributing generously for the cause of the society the couple are leading a worthy life, their way of life must have flown from their respective parents. Sharana Jayadev the son of Sharane Nanjamma and Sharana Basappa Swami studied in high school in Shivaganga during 1960. After taking commerce degree in Bangalore in 1962 he worked as a Manager in a private company at Hubli. His wife sharane Nirmala is the daughter of Sharana M.B.Siddappa and Sharane Gangamma. Of the two sons to the couple, Chi.Druva the first one secured B.E.seat on merit and Chi.Naland the second one is at PUC. Both of them are devoted and well behaved.

Sharana Jayadev is a business man. He deals with the articles of daily use. Though his house is in J.P.Nagar far away from Basava Mantapa (Rajajinagar), the couple never fails to turn up to the weekly prayer and pravachanas.

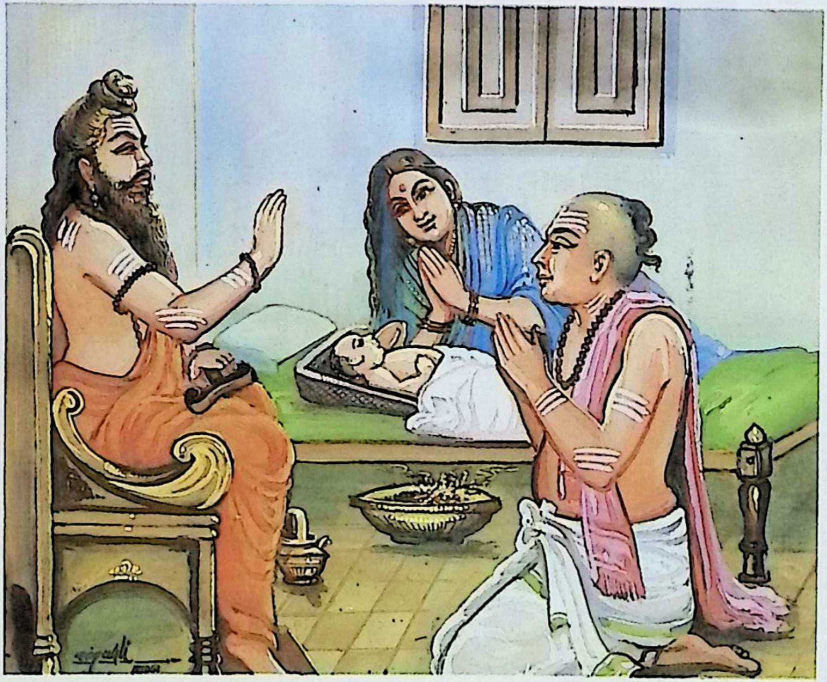
On the auspicious occasion of the birth anniversary of late Mahajagdguru Lingananda Swamiji, Sharane Nirmala has cultivated the habit of distrubuting sweets and fruits to the Anathashrama & Hospitals. Sharana B.Jayadev is not only contributing generously to the activities of our mission but also striving hard for the overall development this Institution.

When the couple came to know the necessity of publishing the life, work & achievement and message of Viswaguru Basavanna the enlightened for the benefit of non-Kannada speaking world, they valunteered to donate Rs.5001/- for this pious peace of Work.

May Lingadeva the Supreme Soul and Lord Basava the prophet grace these generous donors Sharana B.Jayadev and Sharane Nirmala and their worthy sons Chi. Druva and Chi. Naland with health, wealth and prosperity.

10-10-1999
Mumbai

Maha Jagadguru Maata Mahadevi
Basava Dharma Peetha
Kudala Sangama



Birth of Basavarasa and blessings by Guruji

PLACES OF IMPORTANCE CONNECTED WITH LIFE OF BASAVANNA AND OTHER SHARANAS

1. Koodala Sangama is a village situated in the Hunagunda Taluk of Bagalkot District in Karnataka. It is a confluence of Krishna and Malaprabha Rivers. Since this is the place where Basavanna became oneness with God, it has been declared as a piligrimage centre. All the followers of Basavanna come to Sharanamela, every year, at the time of Sankramana, just similar to Muslims go on Haj Piligrimage to Mecca. KoodalaSanagama is situated between Hunagunda and Alamatti, just 7 kms away from National Highway 13. Hunagunda, Ilkal, Bijapur, Bagalkot are the nearby towns. Sharnamela, an important festival of Lingayats, takes place from 12th to 15th January.
2. Basavana Bagewadi is the birth place of Basavanna and it is a taluk place in Bijapur district.
3. Ingleswara is a village adjacent to Basavana Bagewadi. It is the place of Basavanna's Mother.
4. Basava Kalyana is a taluk centre in Bidar district. Basavanna lived here for 36 years and had made this the centre of his works. The famous Anubhava Mantapa was established here.
5. Ulavi is a place where in Sharanas took shelter to protect Vachana literature from the attacks of fantics. This lies in the Sahyadri range located at Supa taluk of Uttara Kannada district. Here Channabasavanna attained Lingaikya.
6. Solapur is a district head quarters in Maharashtra situated on the National Highway 13. This is also a place of Shivayogi Siddharameswara's divine samadhi.

1. Who is Basavanna ?

Basavanna was a great saint, a true visionary and a revolutionary who gave universal religion to the mankind. He fought for the freedom of an individual. He created tremendous awareness among the people by declaring, "None is high or low just by birth. Greatness can be acquired only through personality and pursuit of principles. Thus the whole mankind should get the religious sanctification". It is not an exaggeration to say that his life struggle was for the realisation of social, educational and religious rights of the people. He said that, no one should be deprived of their fundamental rights due to discrimination in the name of caste, status, occupation or anything else. He declared religious sanctification as one such fundamental right. Basavanna's ultimate aim was to make this fundamental right available to each and every one.

Basavanna, keeping Welfare as the ultimate aim, decided to start a revolution relying upon religion as the main instrument. But, when he learnt that people were not attracted by religion, he expedited programmes to take religion to the people. By preaching and writing religious literature in the mother tongue (Kannada), he inspired and facilitated the people to sing their soul elevating experiences and realisations in the language of the soil. As a result of Basavanna's sustained efforts, the spiritual stream which flowed in the mother tongue took the form of the *VACHANAS*. This flowed like a perennial river giving a new fresh breeze of life to innumerable number of exploited people. Brimming with confidence, they arose and attained solvation to shine eternally as sources of confidence.

Basavanna was a fortune of this earth. He, as an harbinger of a new heritage, as a 'humangod', as a saviour of sufferers, as a hope of oppressed, whipped up the confidence in them. This great soul lived in the 12th century.

Before the greyness touch your cheek,
Before the wrinkles plough you face,
Before your body dwindles to
A nest of bones ;
Before, with teeth all gone,
The back all bowed,
You are a burden to your kin ;
Before you prop your legs with hands
And lean heavily upon a staff ;
Before the lustre of your manhood fades ;
Before you feel the touch of death,
Adore our Lord
Lord Lingadeva !

2. The Birth

Bagewadi, a small village situated in modern Bagalkot, was a flourishing town with many great scholars. This was also called as Ingaleswara Bagewadi. Agrahara (Agrahara was a place or an area or a colony given by kings to Brahmins as a gift. Tax collected from the people who lived in this place was enjoyed by those Brahmins to whom this place was donated) was an important place in this town. The house of Madaraja the chief of the township was situated here.

Descended on earth and gained glory,
Has become the head of Brahmin's community,
His abode well versed with Aagamas and epic on Shiva,
Has attained mastery over texts, mantras on Shiva and music,
Was living in Agrahara in Bagewadi
This great person from Kamme clan,
Is Madiraja, a Brahmin and his wife
Was Madalambe, a unique and pious lady.

Thus, Madarasa with his wife Madalambike who was from a good clan was living in Agrahara which was humming with recitation and study of religious texts. They were Shaiva Brahmins belonging to Kamme clan.

Though they were blessed with glory, wealth, knowledge and high status due to their reputed clan, they did not lead satisfactory life. They did not have a male issue. They had a daughter, Nagalambike but did not have a son to carry on priesthood which was a traditional occupation of their family. If this was Madarasa's agony, Madalambike was emaciated mentally due to her own reason. She was under the impression that if she did not leave a son behind to perform the last rites, she would not be accepted in heaven. She had acquainted with this belief as she used to listen to the recitation of epics. Some incidents in the epics depicting the rejection of souls from the heaven since they had no male issue and the fear due to people's abuse and accusations increased her agony.

Nandeeswara was the deity of the town Bagewadi. Madalambike used to go to the Nandeeswara temple everyday. One day, when she was listening to the recitation of *"Nandi Purana"*- an epic on Nandeeswara, she heard that, if any one who does not have a son perform Nandi Vratha (a form of observance in the name of Nandeeswara deity) would get a male issue. Instantly she decided in her mind to perform the same. From that day itself she started the observance of the rite strictly. After the observance was over, she had gone to the temple. There, a flower from the idol dropped down. Immediately the priest gave that to Madalambike and said "Your dream has come true, your appeal has been, honoured. Definitely your expectation will be met with". Madalambike was overjoyed and there were no bounds to her happiness.

On that night, she had a dream in which Lord Shiva had seated amidst the beautiful silvery-snow covered mountain. As soon as Shiva ordained his favourite disciple Nandi to take birth on the earth for the welfare of the whole world, snow-white coloured majestic Nandi started descending on to the earth happily. Eventually, it took the form of a effulgence and entered into her body. With great surprise and joy she narrated the whole sequence to her husband Madarasa. He too became very happy and offered pooja to the deity. This news was soon spread in all parts of the town.

As the dawn is followed by sunrise, this dream was followed by Madalambike's pregnancy. This brought a great joy to the family and the town. Madalambike's joy was that a son will be born and the progeny would continue. While Madarasa felt happy anticipating a son who will arrive and take over his mantle as the chieftain, God was happy as a new visionary will be born on the earth to enlighten the whole world.

Meanwhile, not only physical changes but also mental, behavioural changes started taking place in Madalambike's attitude. She not only became introvert and contemplative, but was involved in prayer, observance and study of the epics. After nine months were over, a male-baby was born on the third day of Vyshakha month of the Anandanama year in Rohini star. [The year coincides with 1134 A.D. After studying some specific Vachanas which spread light on time (Kalagnana Vachanas), these calculations were arrived at. Since a new era began with the birth of the great prophet Basavanna, the people have adored that year as

'Basava Era' . Date of Birth is 30th March 1134].

Soon after the baby was born, an interesting and a special event took place. A cow had died in a colony where high caste people lived. They had asked an untouchable to take away the carcass. An untouchable youth had come to finish off this job. But, when he heard a melodious chanting of mantras, out of curiosity, he climbed on to a threshold of a Brahmin's house and peeped. When the Brahmins who were engaged in chanting looked at the door steps accidentally, they found the untouchable listening to the chanting of mantras. They rose in great anger and started shouting that the sanctity of the religious texts was polluted. The innocent untouchable started shivering. The complaint reached the chieftain-Madarasa and enquiry began. The boy's father confessed that the mistake was committed unknowingly. The complainants did not agree. "Unknowingly if hand is put in the fire does it not burn? Have not the authors of the religious texts said that if an untouchable recites religious texts, his tongue should be slit and if he listens to the recitation, molten lead should be poured into his ears ?" They argued vehemently. Kind hearted Madarasa's soul was not ready to administer such a cruel punishment. At the same time he feared the revolt of Brahmins. When Madarasa was irked in this dilemma, a servant came running and said : "Master, a son is born to you. He is born in Rohini star". Madarasa became overwhelmingly happy and suddenly an idea flashed in his mind. And immediately he said "Gentlemen, you both have argued to arrive at whether this boy has committed a mistake or not. Even if we decide that the boy has committed a sin, since a male baby is born to me it has brought me a tremendous joy and hence I cannot afford to do an inauspicious work by administering such a cruel punishment. On the occasion of this joyous moment I pardon and release him. I hope this would make you all happy". The Brahmins were literally tied, and they could not speak anything more. Realising that no more pressure could be brought on him, they silently dispersed.

This news reached the colony of untouchables and brought great joy to each and every one. The boy's father became overwhelmingly happy and uttered : " Hey, great person, it seems you have born to liberate us. Your birth became the cause for our liberation. May you live for ever...!"

After finishing the meeting, Madarasa came home joyfully with greater eagerness to see his lovely baby-son. But the moment he saw that baby he became crestfallen and his joy, happiness everything came to standstill. Though the baby was pretty, it was still, neither had opened eyes, mouth nor had any movement. It was difficult to make out whether the baby was alive or not. When all were perplexed and fearsticken, a loud chanting "Hara Hara Mahadeva", was suddenly heard. Recognising the familiar voice, Madarasa came out in great joy and saw Jataveda Muni at the doorsteps. Madarasa was very happy. "Oh ! my Gurudev, what an unexpected visit !", obviously he was greatly relieved. He washed Gurudev's feet with water and offering his salutations, he welcomed him.

Clad in saffron clothes, with his hair tied over the head and his forehead anointed with *vibhoothi,* the great Shaiva guru, Jataveda Muni entered the house with a pleasant smile saying , "Not unexpected Madarasa, all ordained by Lord Shiva. You have been blessed with a baby son, is it not ? He is born with the blessings of the Lord." Jataveda Muni was a great scholar and he was not only the head of Koodala Sangama- a pilgrimage centre but also the preceptor of Madarasa's family. He had foreseen the descent of this great soul through his mystic power and had come to bless the baby. He looked at the baby placed in a tray made of bamboo with great affection. The baby was sleeping with its eyes closed, it was just like a doll. He smiled at the baby and took out bhasma *(vibhoothi)* from his wallet and anointed the baby's forehead with it. Next, he placed his hand on the baby's forehead and the moment he whispered the mantra "Om Namaha Shivaya" into its ears the baby immediately opened its eyes and as a symbol of liveliness it started crying. The child was behaving as if the descended soul did not want to see anything else without having at first the glimpse of Guru. The parents became very happy. Jataveda Muni started preaching them : "My dear devoted couples, this baby belongs to Shiva. You have got him since you have carried the observance successfully in the name of Nandeeswara. Nandi is the symbol of Dharma. Nandi is Shiva's vehicle. It means God rides on Dharma. Therefore, this baby is a Dharmic being. You are just his parents, only for the sake of name. Without confining him in your love and recognise him that he is for the welfare of the whole world. Since he is born with the blessings of Vrishabha you name him as BASAVA". The Guru blessed the couple and went back. Madarasa and Madalambe named their lovely baby as BASAVARASA. They started nursing him with great care and affection. In the future when he became the great Guru, he was known as Basaveswara. Moved by his struggle and sacrifices for the emancipation of the under-privileged, people considered him as their own ANNA (elder brother) and eventually, he came to be popularly known as Basavanna.

3. Childhood and Education

Basavarasa was very sharp and brainy. He had great respect for his teachers and elders. He started his studies reposing a tremendous faith in God. He was very brilliant even at his childhood. In those days there were special privileges to Brahmin children for education. Moreover, as Basavarasa was the son of chieftain of Bagewadi, naturally the teachers used to take lot of interest in him.

> The boy Basava gained mastery
> Over all branches of knowledge
> Writing, recitation, arithmetic,
> Language, grammar and composition,
> Prose and poetry, art and literature,
> Rythm and metre of music,
> Epics, Vedas and philosophy.
> He recited faultlessly and expressed eloquently

(Bhimakavi in Basavapurana)

Thus, Basavarasa was fortunate enough to acquire knowledge in various branches of learning that was necessary to become a scholar. Moreover, by birth he possessed an independent and critical bent of mind. He used to question the age old practices and beliefs and would sit for long hours contemplating on them deeply. The way Basavarasa was asking the questions reminded of an ancient proverb.

SIMHAHA SHISHURAPI NIPATATI MADAMALINA
KAPOLA BHITTISHU GAJESHU
PRAKRUTHIRIYUM SATVAVATAM NA
KHALU VAYASTHEJASO HETUHU ॥

This means "A lion-cub though small, would always aim at attacking the temples of a rogue elephant". He used to ask excellent questions since it was only the character not the age which was the basis for brilliance ! All the pupils were exclusively from Agrahara and none of the other caste boys of his age ever came to attend the classes. This perplexed the young boy. He was eager to help his peers. "Please come, I will teach you", he used to approach them. But they used to run away by saying "Why all these for us ?" Basavarasa could notice fear on their faces. This abnormal behaviour of those boys used to fasten the young Basavarasa with deep introspective enquiries.

One day when the young Basavarasa was writing something on the sand in the open space in front of the house, cobbler (an untouchable) Ketha, of the same age, brought a pair of foot wear.

"Madam, I have brought the foot wear stitched" he loudly called Basavarasa's mother.

"Basava... ask him to leave them at the back-yard. Be careful.... don't touch him, we shall take them after sprinkling the cow-dung water" mother told Basavarasa.

The boy became curious.

"Why should we not touch him....?"

"They are Holeyas (untouchables).....of extreme low class......"

"What happens if we touch them ?"

"We will be polluted...."

"If so, would we not become polluted if we wear the footwear stitched by him ?"

"Keep quite ! stop arguing too much "

"Mother, tell me what will happen ? I would like to touch him...."

"No ! Don't do so. God will be angry if you touch him...."

"If God gets angry when I touch another human being who is just like me, then He must be wicked. Ah! I had thought that God was good".

"Basava....... I have had enough, get in, get into the house...."

"Why they are of low caste mother ? Dont they have ear, nose, eye and body just like me ?"

"They all eat meat my son, that you can't understand...."

"If all who eat meat are untouchables, what about the cat which eats rats? why do you touch it ? Even if I touch it you don't scold me, why ?

"Stop your argument, it is too much, go and study..." Madalambike mildly tapped his head and could make him silent momentarily. But the young Basavarasa remained perturbed. He began contemplating. His mental acumen was stimulated and sharp thoughts started emanating from that little brain. The quest for reality had begun.

4. Chivalry

The boy Basavarasa was not just intelligent and shrewd but also bold and courageous. He was always first in answering as well as asking questions. He was not quarrelsome but very friendly among his peers. He would interfere whenever they quarrel and would try to pacify them to be calm.

The classes were run every day at the corner in a spacious courtyard of Nandi temple at Bagewadi. There was a big pond outside but adjacent to the temple. Once, when children had gone down to wash their slates, a boy accidentally stepped on a stone covered with green moss and slipped into the pond. The children who were fearsticken came up and started shouting causing commotion. Immediately Basavarasa dived into the pond and dragged the drowning boy out. Elders had arrived by the time he brought him up over the steps. Like an experienced swimmer, he laid the boy flat on the ground, sat on his back and pressed rhythmically enabling the boy to omit all the water and then he started fanning air.

By then, the boy's parents had come. Suddenly one of Basavarasa's peers who was wicked started complaining, "Basavarasa himself pushed your son into the pond. He saved him only because we started shouting". Since this boy was dull and lazy the teacher used to scold him and praise Basavarasa and this prompted the wickedboy to play mischief using the odd situation to defame Basavarasa. The parents believed this boy's words and they too started making noise.

" I swear in the name of God, I have not done it", Basavarasa said. Coincidently and fortunately by that time the boy had regained the consciousness.

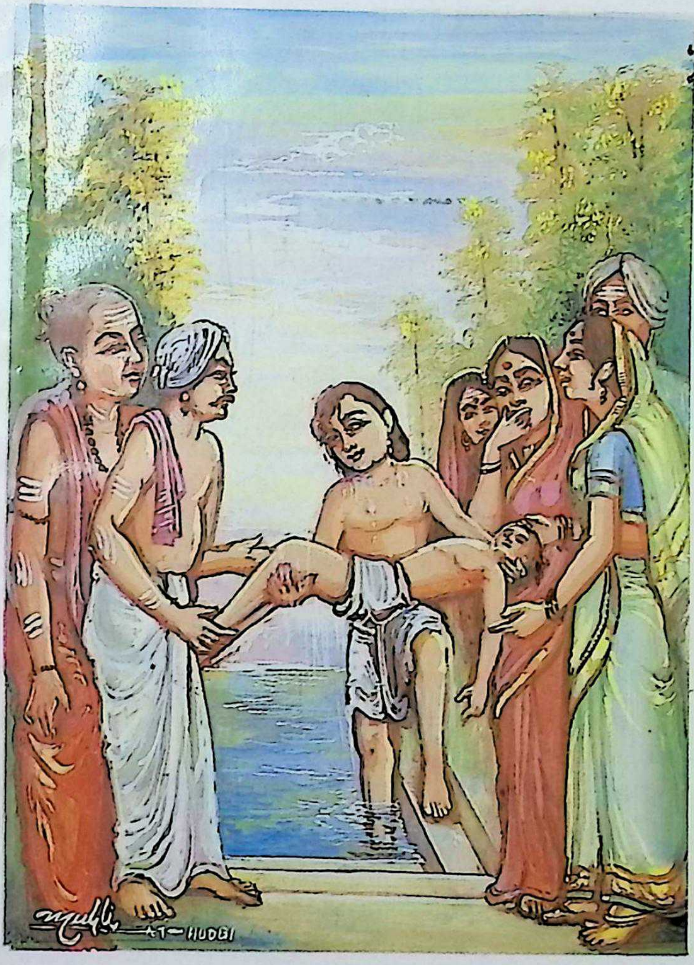
The crowd asked the boy,

"Who pushed you into the pond ? was it Basavarasa ?

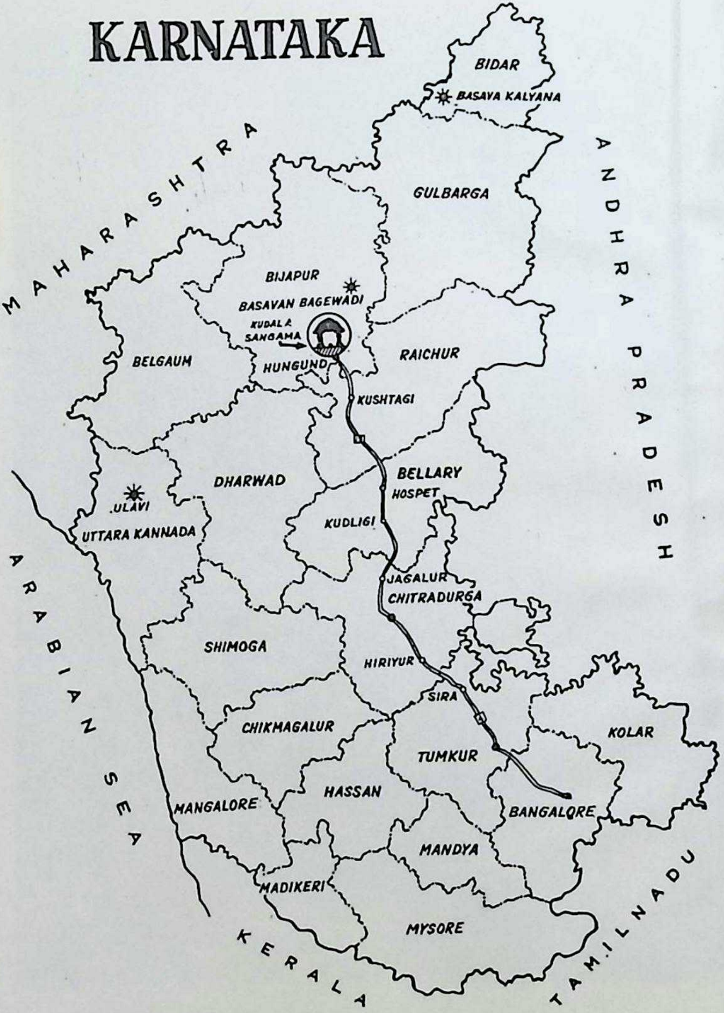
"No, I myself accidentally slipped into the pond when I stepped on the stone covered with green moss", the boy replied.

The parents came to know about the truth. They thanked Basavarasa for saving their son from drowning and expressed their gratitude. They praised him whole heartedly, and hailed his courage and chivalry.

What you call life
Is a wind-blown lamp ;
What you call wealth
Is a market crowd
Do not, relying on this-
This wealth-destroy your life !
Do not forget to adore
Our Lord Lingadeva !


Mulli AT HUDGI

Basavarasa rescuing his drowning friend valiantly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BASAVA KALYANA
MAHARASHTRA
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5. Cogitativeness

The cogitativeness of prodigious Basavanna was growing above his age. The established norms and faiths which were practised by his parents, relatives, friends and the people around used to create many suspicions and doubts in him. He was not ready to agree with any norms which were not accepted by his prudence. The caste system, polytheism, worship of petty gods, religious sacrifice, animal slaughter which were established in the society, had not only created dejection but also encouraged him to protest against them.

One morning, father Madarasa was engrossed in worshipping at home. At the same time Basavarasa returned from the garden, he was tired and thirsty. Madalambike did not allow him inside when he asked for water. She was worried about *"madi"* (madi is a Kannada word, which means purity) which she did not want to spoil until Madarasa finished his pooja. She asked Basavarasa to wait till Madarasa's pooja was over. Basavarasa waited for ten minutes and then came inside and enquired whether his father had finished pooja. But Madarasa was involved in worshipping many deities. He was offering pooja to Vighneswara, Saraswathi, Shiva, Vishnu, Parvathi, Lakshmi, one after another. Basavarasa enquired his mother for the second time but Madarasa was still performing pooja. He was involved in worshipping another deity. Instead of meditation and spiritual thoughts which were essential for spiritual attainment, a mechanical recitation of verses was going on. Once in every ten minutes Basavarasa used to come in and enquire his mother whether his father's pooja was over. When he learnt that his father had not yet completed, he came out and started digging in front of the courtyard. After worshipping all the deities in the pooja room, Madarasa came out to worship the Sun, threshold and *Bilwa* tree (Bael tree ; the botanical name being AEGLE MAMELOS. Its leaves are used to worship Linga). There, he noticed small pits dug by Basavarasa. He became furious :

"What play is this Basavarasa ? Why have you dug these pits in the courtyard ?" Madarasa asked his son.

"Father, I was very thirsty. When I asked mother for water, she told me that *"madi"* should not be spoilt till your pooja was over and asked me to wait. But I was very thirsty, so I started digging these pits to quench my thirst."

"You mad ! does water come so soon ? does it come if you dig like this ? you must go on digging at the same spot. Instead of digging twelve pits, you have to dig only one and deeply, only then you can get water, is it not ?" Madarasa laughed merrily.

"Exacty father ! To get close to God we have to channelise all our attention on one thing with the help of only one mantra. Instead of this if we worship different deities mechanically, can we experience God who is the confluence of knowledge and bliss ?"

Madarasa was astonished by this answer. Then Basavarasa pronounced.

"Listen my father, instead of
Worshipping the Supreme Creator,
Why do you entangle
Your soul in transmigration by worshipping
Indra, the Sun, Moon, Fire, Mountain ?
Alas ! how you could be my father
Shiva's devotees are my father and mother "

(Bhimakavi)

That means, instead of worshipping the Supreme Creator, the father of the whole universe, are you not entangling your soul in the material existence by worshipping the Sun, the Moon, fire and other things?" Madarasa could not answer, remained silent. These questions were not out of haughtiness but were the result of pure and sharp thoughts which were radiating from his son's intellect.

After some days, another occasion had arisen. It was a special event. Under the presence of Madarasa, a sacrificial ceremony was in progress. In that grand ceremony, Basavarasa was keenly observing everything and everyone. He saw the people who were enjoying by offering valuable articles like costly silk cloths dipped in ghee, diamonds, ornaments to fire. He felt very bad and asked ;

"Father, why are you all offering these valuable articles to fire ? couldn't these costly silk cloths be used to cover the body of so many people who don't have even a piece of cloth ? wouldn't these ghee and oil which are being put in fire suffice those people who are in need ?"

Madarasa became furious. He browbeated with low voice and said : Stop your stupid arguments, you often raise the same thing everywhere..."

" Instead of giving these valuable things to a living being why are you all wasting them by just putting in fire which is a non-living thing ? Please tell me......"

"You fool ! Fire is a god. Whatever we offer here to fire will reach Him". Madarasa was very angry.

"Allright father ! If fire is a god, then why do the people struggle to put out when their houses catch fire? They should leave it to God, is it not ? But they throw dust and dirty water instead of ghee and silk cloth. At that time they don't praise fire but they scold, why ?"

"Basava, you are talking too much and going headlong. Your words are out of rudeness. Keep quite, don't ask nonsense questions in the middle..."

Another occasion ;

A big sacrificial ceremony was in progress. Since a famous festival was being celebrated in that area, many people had gathered from different places. There, Madarasa was given a prominent seat. In status, wealth, erudition and in all other aspects he was respectable. He had brought Basavarasa wanting him to enjoy the grandeur. Nevertheless a sense of apprehension was simmering in his heart as he never knew what sort of questions Basavarasa would ask. The ceremony was in progress without any disturbance. A he-goat was tied to a pole-*yoopa stambha.* It was a sacrificial animal. slaying of the animal was started. Amidst chanting of the hymns, the innocent animal started shedding tears helplessly. Those tears not only swung Basavanna into deep thought but also made him to weep. Tears were rolling down from his eyes. His class mates were surprised and said,

"What sort of courageous boy you are ; eh.... he is crying like a girl", they rediculed him.

"Ah !..... is it not a living being which would like to live like us ? Why should the people kill it.....?"

"To please God !..."

"It is lie, untruth ; the kind hearted God can never ask for a living being as a sacrifice which he has created. He is not cruel..." Basavarasa asserted.

"The life of a sacrificed goat becomes meaningful. It reaches the heaven soon since it is offered to God, ..."

"If there is such an easy way to reach heaven, old people can be offered as sacrifice. If I am going to be offered as sacrifice, I may also reach God easily, is it not....?" Basavarasa questioned.

"Leave it, who will speak to him. If we keep arguing with him we can't enjoy this ceremony." His classmates pooh-poohed Basavarasa and moved away. But Basavarasa was terribly moved by the goat's cry. He was feeling as if his heart was squeezed. That agonising cry of the goat had left him in deep sorrow. That pain which had stirred his heart has started flowing out as tears. Helplessly, as a representative of God, Basavarasa promised the goat on behalf of Him.

Oh goat ! do you cry because
They have killed you to fulfil their promise
Do you cry before them who recite Vedas
Do you cry before them who listen to scriptures
Our Lingadeva would punish them for making you cry.

A rabbit that a huntsman brings,
They pay for it the proper price ;
But none will give a betel-nut
For a deal ruler of the land !
A man's life is less worth
Than a rabbit's, see !
Do you, then, put your trust
In Lord Lingadeva,

6. Renunciation of Home

Basavanna's cogitativeness increased day by day. Absurd practices, inhuman divisions and exploitations had made him more introvert. "Is religion just a restriction or an act of folly ? Is it not possible to remove the consciousness of high status and low status, which is responsible for the social evils ?" These thoughts used to come to his mind very often.

At this time, he had attained the age of undergoing *'Upanayana'* or thread giving ceremony*. It was the day of sacred thread wearing ceremony. All relatives had gathered. The parents called Basavanna to perform the religious rites. But he says :

"Appa, Nagalambike is elder to me. I eat fruits only after I give her. I wear clothes only after she wears. Let her go through *Upanayana* first, then for me".

Avoiding to become furious in front of the relatives, Madarasa told him with patience,

"My son, there is no religious sanctification for women in our customs ; being a son, only you are eligible".

"Woman is an inseperable part of man. She gives birth as a mother, lives as a companion, fills home as a daughter, brings prosperity to family as a daughter-in-

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*According to Harihara, *Upanayana* was over and then Basavanna rejected the sacred thread. But, according to Bhimakavi *Upanayana* was not over. When Basavanna's parents were trying to give the sacred thread he rejected it and renounced the house.

law. I can't accept the evil practice of denying the religious sanctification to her. This gender discrimination is not acceptable. The farmer, who works in our garden is a man, why he doesn't have this sacred thread ?"

"He is a Shudra, he is not eligible for religious sanctification....."

"If so, here is an *acharya*, a saint clad in saffron clothes. He is neither a woman nor a Shudra, why he doesn't have the sacred thread ?"

" He is a Mahatma. He has severed himself from the caste impurity, blood relation and liabilities. That is why he has not worn..."

"Instead of getting solutions, my doubts are still becoming more complicated. Until my prudence accepts, I will not undergo the Upanayana".

Madarasa became very angry,

"Basavaa.... listen to your parents. You must understand the principle of Mathrudevobhava (mother is God) and Pitrudevobhava (father is God)my son"

"Forgive me father. I can't accept both of you as my father and mother for the reason that you have given me birth. God, the Creator of the Universe is both my father and mother".

"Don't you respect our words for atleast we have given you birth and nursed and brought you up ? You just listen what we say", said Madarasa in anger.

"Since Cuckoo can't build its own nest, it lays eggs in crow's nest. It is the crow which sits on the egg and enables the infant Cuckoo to hatch out and it feeds the infant too.With the arrival of spring the young Cuckoo sings as *kuhoo kuhoo*. Thereafter the crow, after realising that it is not its breed, starts biting it. Even then, the Cuckoo does not sing *'ka ka'* instead of *kuhoo kuhoo*. But by then the Cuckoo's feathers would have grown, and it starts flying freely. Like this, God, the real Creator of me, had kept me temporarily in your family which symbolises the crow's nest. You have nursed me. Now, ignorance symbolising the month *Magha* (winter) is over and the realisation symbolising the month *Chaitra* (spring) has arrived. I have known my real-being. My soul is singing *kuhoo kuhoo* in desire of Shiva. Does it stop if you interrupt ?"

"Basava....., if you don't listen to me and don't accept our practices, there is no place for you in my house...."

"As you wish father. I was waiting for these words. I am quite aware of my destiny. I neither have anger nor dejection towards any one. I have to get enlightenment and for that I will depart now only...."

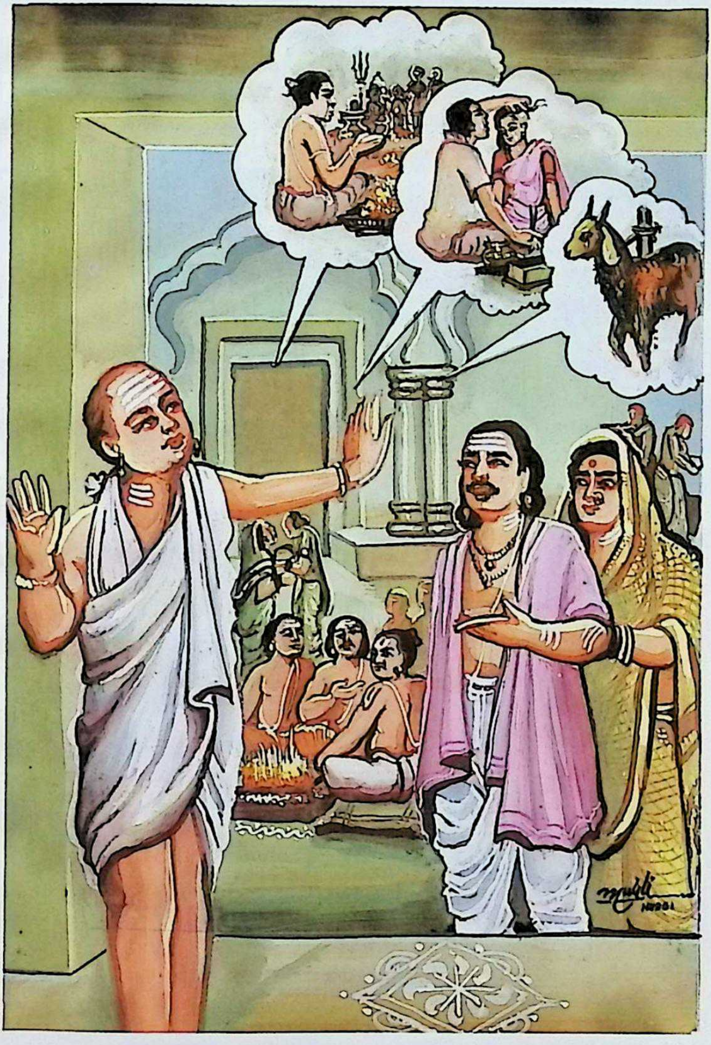
Madalambike was astonished by listening to the conversation between the father and the son.

"My son, Basavarasa don't be angry. You can live as you wish, please don't go...."

" O my mother, birds take shelter in the trees during night. As the sun rises, they go in search of food.

We were all sitting in the tree of worldly affairs as long as the darkness of ignorance existed. As the knowledge dawned like sunrise, why the illusion ? We have to search food for our souls. Please bless me mother....." Basavanna left home in 1142 A.D (which corresponds to *DUNDUBHINAMA* year of Almanac calender) in search of a way to attain enlightment.

The body is basket, mind the snake.
See, how they live together,
The snake and basket !
You have no notion when
It may kill you,
No notion when he bites !
O Lord Lingadeva
If I can worhip Thee
Day after day,
That the charm !



Basava's refusal to wear the so called sacred thread and renouncing the house

Some salient events of

Basava's life

1. Birth-1134 A.D. in Rohini Star in the month of Vaishakha of Anandanama Samvathsara-[30-4-1134]
2. Renouncing the house during-1142-1143 A.D.
3. Completion of education at Kudala Sangama-1143-1153
4. Arrival at Mangalavede (Maharastra)-1153 A.D.
5. Arrival at Kalyana from Mangalavede-1160 A.D. on Monday, the fifth day of Sravana month, in the year Vikramanama Samvathsara.
6. Establishment of Anubhava Mantapa-1169 A.D.
7. Birth of Chennabasaveswara-Nandananama Samvathsara- (1172 A.D.)
8. Arrival of Allama Prabhu and Siddharameshwara-1184 A.D.
9. Marriage of Sheelavanta and Lavanya-1196 A.D.
10. Exilement of Lord Basava-Twelth day of Phalguna month of Rakshasanama Samvathsara-1196 A.D.
11. Death sentence to Haralayya, Madhuvarasa and Sheelavanta on 14th day of Phalguna month 1196 A.D.
12. Assassination of Bijjala-Fullmoon day of Phalguna month-(1196)
13. Lingaikya (Merging with God) of Lord Basava-5th day of Sravana month of Nalanama Samvathsara at Kudala Sangama-[30-7-1196]

7. Beyond the Bondage of attachment

Basavanna left home severing the attachment with his parents as an explorer of truth and as a protestor of superstitial beliefs and inane practices. At the same time his sister Akka Nagalambike was engrossed in deep thought. Basavanna was neither rude nor ignorant as parents, relatives and the society had understood. He was not only courageous to accept truth with open mind but also brave enough to protest untruth. Though many wise persons often used to ponder over thought provoking questions which Basavanna used to ask, they finally used to take refuge in the established conventions by suppressing their inquisitiveness..

" He will become a great person in the future. At least I should stand by him for his thoughts and vision......", Akka Nagalambike decided. She was the only one to support him with great determination.

She used to tell him very often, "Basavarasa you are not an ordinary boy. While other boys are engaged in playing and eating , you are engrossed in thinking about religion and society. You have to accomplish a stupendous objective."

"Akka..... is it not a difficult way which I would like to tread ?" He used to ask.

"Basavaa..... your objective is great. But cleansing the minds of these people, which have been polluted and decayed over the centuries, is a very difficult task. I don't know how you will achieve it ?"

"A heavy burden to a goat is a trivial to an elephant. May be, it is impossible to a human being but not to God; I surrender to Him completely. He will definitely enable me to achieve an impossible task." Basavarasa said with tremendous faith in God.

"That is right, which is your next destination...?"

"Where can I get a suitable environment for my independent thoughts ?" Basavarasa asked.

"Look here, Koodala Sangameswara is our family deity. There is a Gurukul, isn't it ? That is headed by Jathaveda Muni, and it is the centre for Pashupatha Shaivites. There is no caste discrimination. Every one has an equal opportunity to learn. The guru is a progressive thinker. There is no provision for sacrificial rites and Brahmanic practices. Mainly it is the centre for earning knowledge and meditation. He will certainly accept your views. He likes those who are yearning for salvation. Also Brahmapuri, my father-in-law's place, is very near to Koodala Sangama. You can often visit our place. There, your personality will blossom like a blooming bud opening its petals when it is kept in a pot of cold water....."

" Yes Akka, you are right. Last time, when I had been there with father to a carnival, I liked the tranquility and serene environment very much. Equally, Jathaveda Muni is divine and majestic. He is not the one who is involved in worldly affairs. He is a knowledge-loving saint. I shall go there only."

Basavarasa's motivation flew high. He started towards Koodala Sangama. He was captivated when he saw the golden pinnacle (Kalasha) and the tower of Lord Sangameswara temple, after crossing the Krishna river in a boat. He came to the temple in wet clothes after having a dip in the river. The moment he stepped into the sanctum sanctorium he was thrown into ecstacy. The *linga* anointed with *vibhoothi* and decorated beautifully with flowers was magnificently shining. All these-the serenity of the surrounding, tranquility in the temple and the existence of the Sangameswara Linga as a beholder and a lone witness of the whole universe, made Basavarasa enchanted. He felt as if his long pending prayer was answered and had come to a place to which he really belonged to after staying away for many years. Then, Basavarasa sings in ecstacy :

"O ! Lord of lords, Lord of destitutes, ultimate mother, father, relative, clan, strength, eyes, direction, mind, the virtue, life. O! Lord, guard me, guard me!"

He was delighted as if he had got the lap of his real mother, after being away from her and enervated being punished by step mother. He felt as if he was breathing the fresh air after being liberated from the clutches of conventional values, which was suffocating. The happiness which could not be expressed in words was coming out in tears.

Alas, O ! Shiva, you do not have least mercy
Alas, O ! Shiva, you do not have least pity
Why you have created me as a sufferer in the world
Being kept away from you. Koodala Sangama,
Were there not any plants, tree or anything else for my birth ?

I took refuge in you with belief that you will
liberate me from transmigration
O ! Liberator, bestow upon me O ! Linga the divine
Hara Hara Shri Mahadeva, Jaya Jaya Shri Mahadeva
Hara Hara Shri Mahadeva, my mind is chanting
It is saying that I surrunder to Koodala Sangama.

If the mind craves hoping to get good,
Nothing will come in
Just by laying hands and keep looking at the
tip of the palm tree
Only to get pain in the neck
Listen O ! Koodala Sangama
All will come only when you grant graciously.

Thus, the stream of feelings started flowing out in words from the bottom of his heart. Meanwhile, Jathaveda Muni had finished the morning pooja. That day, he was unusually anxious. As if everything had been ordained, he started moving towards the temple. When he stood inside the temple, he saw the boy amidst the lighted lamps, shining like the sun. He was sitting in a meditating posture and was not aware of the external world, just he was pleading for God's grace. The moment the guru saw the boy he was thrilled as how a diamond merchant jubiliates when he gets an invaluable diamond. After observing the boy for sometime, he quitely came near him and moved his hand gently over Basavarasa's head. He realised that "he was not an ordinary boy, but sure of becoming a great prophet." Then he tells Basavarasa ;

"My dear disciple, you need not have to go any where, you need not have to worry. Bring fresh flowers everyday regularly and worship Sangameswara. By taking vouchsafe you may live happily."

Basavanna became happy on hearing this and saluted the guru as if his appeal was honoured. Surprisingly, the guru himself had spoken to him as if it was predestined by God, when he was thinking how he should approach the guru to introduce himself and start the studies. He felt happy since what Akka Nagalambike used to tell him that "his life boat was being guided by an inconceivable hand of God," had become true.

8. Basavanna in the joy of worship

With an immense dedication and devotion, Basavanna started working as a priest in his favourite place Koodala Sangama. Unlike other priests, he never used to spend time either lazily or by involving in prating and pretence. He would get up much earlier to sunrise and make preparations for pooja with lot of concentration and dedication. While taking bath, wearing clothes, plucking flowers, filling water, his mind is full of Lord Sangameswara. He worships Him by collecting pure water and varieties of flowers. He would decorate the Linga with simplicity but beautifully, and beholds it. Then he sings emotionally ;

Offer eightfold worship and sixteenfold rites
Behold the pooja offered
Sing the anthems of Shiva
Leap and Dance infront of Shiva
Converse in devotion
Unite with our Koodala Sanga.

He takes hours together in carefully collecting the necessary articles for pooja and worshipping with equal dedication. He dances beholding the beauty of pooja and goes ecstatic. Looking at this, the senior priests used to feel jealous of him. They were not only ridiculing him but also used to ask him as to what he would derive from taking so much of strain ? Basavarasa's one and only answer was;

Pooja without love and elegance without friendliness
That pooja and that elegance
Is a beauty pictured
And a sugarcane pictured
No pleasure in embracing it, no taste in chewing it
This is what O! Koodala Sangamadeva the
Devotion of an untrue devotee.

Thus, Basavarasa while functioning as a priest, involved himself in earning knowledge and pursuit of Yoga and meditation.

He spent the period of his adolescence in the academy of Koodala Sangama. The essence of path of devotion (Bhakti Yoga)-the surrender, the kernel of path of knowledge (Jnana Yoga)-the introspection and the essence of path of Karma (Karma Yoga)-the dedicated work- all these three had blended in him and he began to accomplish them. By the time he had become a youth of twenty-one years, he had acquired enormous knowledge and maturity of mind. The social set up, the established faiths, insane practices, mechanical worship, unhindered exploitation in the name of religion had in those days, not only created a strong dejection but also a storm in his mind. If his mind was attracted by the resourceful knowledge of Vedic-religion in Upanishad, he was baffled by the Yagna-Yaga, killing of horses and goats, worship of Indra, moon, saturn and other petty-deities and pompus and mechanical worship. If the devotion of the Shaiva religion and the devotional path trodden by the 63 venerable ancients had captured his mind, he was scared as it was being converted into insane superstitious, bizarre and rageful devotion. While the non-violence of Jainism had attracted him, it's difficult and meaningless practices and restrictions restrained him from being drawn towards Jainism. If humanist Buddha's casteless society and his arguments in favour of the humanism had captured his mind, the lack of dedication to work and laying stress on seeking alms as the main work in this "Bhikku Dharma", "Sanyasa Dharma" had created distress in him. Therefore, Basavanna had an ambition for collecting worthy things from different religions to bring new life styles, philosophy and religion into practice in the way a bee collects nector from different flowers to prepare honey which is entirely new in appearance and character. Basavanna had an aspiration to give a definite shape to the conglomeration of all the above good aspects namely, the devotion of Shaiva religion, knowledge of Upanishat, non-violence of Jainism, humanism of Buddhism and over and above all these, the realisation in him not to discard life as an illusion but to divinize it. He wanted to mould all these aspects giving due prominence to labour (work), which is the back bone of the State and society as well.

At the age of twenty-one, the time he had finished

(* In poems from 11 to 21 in 6th cantos in "Basava Charitrya" of Singiraja. The probable year of the event was Yuvanama Samvatsara in 1155 A.D.)

his education, he was mentally completely matured. At this point of time, a peculiar event took place.*

As Kapila Shasti Muhurtham had arrived, the priests were engaged in performing pompous pooja at Koodala Sangama. Basavanna saw people having dip in water, going round the tree, donating cows with their horns decorated with caps made of silver, performing a special worship by offering one thousand lotus flowers and other absurd practices. He became introvert and a number of questions flocked to his mind. Are these really necessary for God ? If God can be pleased by sheer ostentatious worship, what about the poor people ? Are they be bereft of God's grace ?

At the same time, some poor devotees came to him and expressed their agony that it was not possible for them to worship so pompously. Basavanna felt sympathetic and took them to the temple, collected some flowers and then started worshiping. The priests, who were engaged in pompous pooja became very furious and immediately started shouting : "Catch him ! beat him ! kill him ! Though Basavanna was engrossed in pooja, he was dragged in all directions by them. They pounced on him conceiving that Basavanna will not only come in their way of collecting money from the people but also performs pooja which would not be ritualistic according to Vedas and Aagamas. But suddenly a reverberating sound came out from Sangameswara Linga and a divine voice uttered "Ho !..... the worship you are offering is untrue; worship offered by Basava is pleasing". All of them- the Brahmin group and devotees were astonished. They all saluted Basavanna with awe and devotion. They realised that 'Sangameswara (or Sanga) was Basava and Basava himself was Sangameswara'.

This epoch-making event was such an important occurance that it had not only made the people to believe that Basavanna's practice and thoughts were dearer to God but also attracted the entire mass. It heralded that, "Oh! here is a great thinker, he has come here as a representative of God to guide the whole world". The whole episode reached the town Mangalavedhe of King Bijjala. The king was astonished when the people, who had gone to the carnival, started colourfully describing the event. When the prime minister Baladeva heard this, he saluted in great respect and devotion to Basavanna from his place. He started enquiring as to who was Basavarasa. In quest of information about Basavarasa, he came to know that ;

Baladevarasa's sister was none other than Madalambike, who was the wife of Madiraja (or Madarasa) of Bagewadi. So far, he had understood that Basavarasa had left home not undergoing *Upanayana* and disparaging his parents. Now he clearly understood that Basavarasa is not rude but courageous intellectualist, a pious, virtuous and a fortunate that he has become a loveable devotee of Sangameswara. Suddenly an idea flashed in his mind. He had only daughter, Neelaganga. He developed an ambition of marrying his daughter to his own sister's son and keep both of them with him. When he was carrying this ideas in his mind an opportunity favoured him.

9. Arrival of Baladevarasa

The time of the convocation ceremony of the Gurukul coincided with the celebrations of the main carnival of the Koodala Sangama, the place of pilgrimage. Baladevarasa was invited as the chief guest for the convocation to be held under the guidance of the great teacher Jathaveda Muni for the students who had completed the studies in the Gurukula -the learning centre of Koodala Sangama. He was the Prime Minister of the king Bijjala-a feudatory in the Chalukyan empire. This invitation provided him an opportunity to visit Koodala Sangama. Since a long time Baladevarasa could not have darshan of Lord Sangameshwara, his family deity.

Since Basavanna's formal education had reached the final stage, his future was at cross-roads. On this occasion, Kulapathi Jathaveda Muni had arranged for brief lectures by his students. Normally a guru enjoys by showing his students, who were enlightened and yearning for salvation to the visitors similar to how a wordly man enjoys himself by exhibiting his wealth and children to the relatives. Kulapathi Jathaveda Muni introduced Basavanna, an invaluable gem of his Gurukula, to the invitees by arranging his lecture.

In his lecture, while talking about his future, Basavanna said "I don't know how to unite and reform the society which is terribly shattered into fragments. In the shade of a coconut tree, the shade of the bunch of the coconuts is also seen. Standing on that shade, if we pretend to pluck and drink the coconuts, does it really mean we have drunk the tender coconut water ? Does it quench the thirst ? That is just a shade. Though the shade is just adjacent to the real coconut tree, it is a semblance but not the real. Likewise, if we involve in the practice of superstcious beliefs and pretence by considering these as the religious practices, what we get is just lassitude which is neither the real benefit nor the satisfaction. This is like just an illusion of eating the shade of the coconut bunches and pretending to be satisfied.

When we measure perpetually
Does the measuring vessel get tired ?
When we walk perpetually
Does the road get tired ?
When we do exercise perpetually
Does the stick get tired ?
Instead of the devotee who does not understand the truth
Getting tired, does the Linga get tired ?

If we continue with meaningless practices, we simply get tired without any benefits. People dip when they see water and go round when they see tree, thinking that they have got the fulfillment. But do they really know the form of God?

The reprehensible concept of touchability and untouchability is not only in one field but is present in all the fields in different forms. It is not only present among the human beings,but in the land, water, flowers, languages, directions, human organs, time, likewise it is being practised every where. People get frightened by recognising discrimination in an immutable flow of time, good-bad, Gulika-Rahu etc... They believe Ganges water at Kashi as the most sacred and the people who take dip in it will be absolved from all the sins, making a refutable discrimination in water which is available in the creation. They have an illusion that prayer rendered in the mother tongue is not sufficient but should be in Sanskrit only. Man's intelligence has created the languages. Feeling is the language of the heart, that itself is the most sacred. What is the use in the jugglery of words which does not have feelings ? There is a necessity to build a natural and simple path so that even a common man should experience the bliss of God. I have a dream of building such an exquisite path. The souls are moving towards God continuously as pilgrims. All are travellers and Sharanas- who have surrendered to God. They don't have the confusion over caste, creed and sect. Once this model of ideal society is built only then my life becomes meaningful". Thus, Basavanna spoke eloquently about his opinions and ideals. The whole gathering listened to him in silence. Jathaveda Muni was surprised, delighted and felt proud. Basavanna, who captured the attention of the whole gathering, became the main attraction of Baladevarasa's attention. The audience were surprised and they dispersed expressing their appreciation over his talent, erudition and thoughtfulness.

10. Marriage Proposal

Baladevarasa spent the whole night in remembrance of the pleasing personality of Basavanna and the manner in which he spoke out his lofty ideals. He exclaimed' what a talented person he is !' He got up early in the morning and after having bath, he went to meet the Guru. The first question he asked was;

" That brilliant and talented young student is my sister's ...." But Jathaveda Muni interrupted him with a smile and said, "Yes, I know he is your sister Madalambike's son".Baladevarasa's guess came true and there were no bounds to his happiness."Oh! he is the one, my sister's son Basavarasa ? The one we had misunderstood as a recalcitrant and had left home defying his parents' advice? what a miracle!"

"He is not a recalcitrant Baladevarasa! He is courageous and revolutionary. He is a blessed soul. He is an intellectual who rejects, without fear, any thing which is not accepted by his prudence...."

"What a talented person my nephew is! Gurudev, I have a supplication. An ambition has arised in me to marry my daughter Neelaganga,who is an apple of my eye, to Basavarasa and make him the lord of my whole wealth.Please bless me approving this." Suddenly the guru became serious and this caused a mild panic in Baladevarasa who was quick enough to apologise; "please, pardon me if my request is wrong."

"Nothing wrong minister! But,Basavanna by nature is an introvert. He is not the one to think of entering into matrimonial life even in his dream. He has many ideals in his mind and heart. How can I put this proposal before such a soul ?"

"He is very obedient and definitely he will not disobey your words. Please propose....." Baladevarasa pleaded. After thinking for a while, Jathaveda Muni decided something in his mind and he sent someone to call Basavarasa.

Basavarasa, after having bath in the Sangama (confluence of the river Krishna and the river Malaprabha), was away, far from the noise of the crowd, engrossed in meditation on a rock surrounded by water. A call from his one of his peers awakened him and he came to know that the guru wants him. He hurried to the Guru and offered salutations. And, when he noticed Baladevarasa he offered his respects.

"Basavarasa, you are a very talented and an intelligent person...." Baladevarasa complimented Basavarasa.

"It is your affection and generosity......"

"Your speech was very effective yesterday. The expression was fluent and appealing......"

"But, it is easier said than done respected Prime minister. It is very difficult to build such a society. Even those who feel happy hearing the purpose of building a rational society are not forth coming. I don't know when

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my dream will come true?" Basavarasa said in sadness.

The guru noticed the conversation entering into philosophy and society and he intelligently diverted the topic by saying ;

"Basavarasa, he is not only the Prime minister of King Bijjala of Chalukya kingdom, but also your mother's own brother. He is your maternal uncle....."

"Kindly excuse me gurudev. I bow and offer my salutations to the hon'ble Prime minister. Let us not discuss about blood relation. After surrendering to God, the guru is my father and mother and guru's relatives are my real Kith and Kin....."

Basavanna was startled when later on the guru discussed with him about the marriage in privacy. "Why gurudeva, have I committed any mistakes ? Why is this hard decision to send me away from your proximity ?

"Basavanna, I don't want to send a student like you out. You shall raise to high position with the help of Baladevarasa by marrying Neelaganga....."

"I don't want any other positions; not even Brahma's position, Vishnu's position and Rudra's position. Serving a sage like you is enough for me, I am content."

"There are many to serve me, but very few to serve the society and religion. If not for you, at least for the world you must raise to a higher position." Basavanna was shocked and remained silent. When he consulted Akka Nagalambike, she also supported the marriage proposal. He became all alone in this matter, no one to support his arguments and finding no immediate solution. He plunged into sorrowness. He decided to go to Lord Sangameswar temple to unburden his grief and get consoled. He had decided to know what was God's will.

He got up early in the morning and came out of his hut. He took bath and sat down absorbed in meditation on the bank of the river. When he became awakened, he saw a young woman standing with hesitation it clearly reflecting on her face He asked;

"Who are you ?" Basavanna asked her.

"I am that unfortunate Neelaganga whom you are reluctant to marry." She replied.

"It is good that you have talked about it. I am a person who has dreamt about so many ideals. You are basically interested in wordly happiness by entering into matrimonial life. You can't live happily by marrying an ideal person like me. Therefore, if you volunterily reject this marriage proposal, both of our problems will automatically be solved......"

"I promise you that I will not be a hurdle in the accomplishment of your ideals. I will consider you not merely as my husband, but as my guru and the light of my life who guides me. I always follow you whether it is happiness or sorrow, pain or pleasure, fame or defame. If you become a great light, I would offer my life as oil and wick to it......" Basavanna was surprised after listening to her. He silently walked towards the temple.

11. Bewailing before Lord Sangamanatha

The moment he entered into the temple,the sorrow overflowed. He started singing standing at the doorsteps of the sanctum sanctorium.

"You have spread the desires
In front of me as greens.
How can the cattle understands?It treats that as grass
Make me desireless and feed me with sense of devotion
Foster me O! Koodala Sangama Deva."

"O! God, none is there to support me. You only show me the way. Bless me so that my mind will not fall pray to any kind of desires". When Basavanna was grieving, suddenly there appeared a light which took a definite shape and stood in front of him. The Lord Sanga-meswara had appeared infront of Basavanna, He said ;

"My son Basavanna,I will make you famous on this earth. Go to Mangalavedhe where Bijjala is ruling." Basavanna was taken aback by these words. He said in deep sorrow:

" My Lord, how cruel you are ! What mistake I have committed ? Does the moonlight have heat? Does elixer contain poison ? What sort of justice is it to send out the one who has taken shelter in you ? A mother will never feed poision to the baby which is craving for food. Being a great giver, is it right to give poision ? This cruelty should not be for your pure love." At this time, when Basavanna was supplicating, again the Lord Sangameswara's ordain was heard. "Basavanna, I have more affection than your devotion. Can I stay apart from you ? As a strength, I will be at your back. I will enable you to accomplish my will. You should become means to me. You come tomorrow after bath, I will bless you. I myself is your guru. Shoulder the great responsibility and preach the world the concept of "Sublimation of life" by accomplishing the spirituality even after entering into the matrimonial life. You are the form representative of my formlessness. Go my son, my blessings will be always with you" His tension eased off as swelling milk, after boiling for a while, recedes when cold water is poured. He bowed to the God and came out with determination.

Approval for Marriage

Basavanna came to the guru in content and offered his salutations.

The mind is serpant, body the basket.
See, how they live together
You may have no notion when
It may kill you,
No notion when it bites !
O! Koodala Sangama Deva
If I can worship you each and everyday
That the charm !

Gurudeva, in the body-the basket, there is mind-the serpant. The play is amazing but dangerous. It is difficult to say when it brings about destruction. As how a juggler goes to play with the serpant knowing the tricks and with intoxicant, I go to play with matrimonial life-the serpant with daily worship as the intoxicant. May your blessings be always with me. May my mind be not polluted by the selfishness and narrow mindedness. Keep my mind always pure Gurudev."

Baladevarasa became very happy when the news of the approval for the marriage was informed to him. But Basavanna laid some conditions. "No hurdle, anxiety, political pressures should be brought upon me when I begin to accomplish my ideals. Secondly, since woman and men are equal before the God and in the religious field, according to the religion which I am going to build you have to give initiation and religious sanctity to your daughter." Baladevarasa was shocked by the second condition.

" Is it ever possible? According to our tradition woman is Shudra, excluded from the religious sanctification......"

"Then, how can a boy, born to an unsanctified Shudra mother become a Brahmin ? If by birth all are Shudras and by sanctification become Brahmins, then all should have religious sanctification. Moreover, husband and wife should be of one culture, character, righteousness. It is not possible to cook rice mixing it with paddy. Even if it is cooked, it can not be eaten. Likewise, the union and company of sanctified husband and unsanctified wife is like cooking rice mixed with paddy. Thirdly, woman also feels hungry like man and therefore she eats. She has physical desire and therefore she does marry. Likewise, she has soul and thirst for knowledge and hence she too should be given an opportunity." Baladevarasa confirmed the wedding by agreeing to the conditions and returned to Kalyana with his family.

What is the life of one
Who does not rise at dawn
To look intent on linga ?
What is the life of one
Who is a living corpse, a lying corpse
A walking corpse, a talking corpose ?
O Lingadeva Lord
Creator of the world,
What is the life of one
Who will not slave for Thee ?

12. Guru Basavalinga : The Architect of Ishtalinga

After having bath, Basavanna enterd the temple before the dawn as ordained by Lord Sangamanatha in his dream. He was clad in fresh clothes. Basavanna was engrossed in meditation in the temple, just similar to Budha who sat under the Banyan tree at Gaya for enlightenment..

My Lord, I am searching for you
In an immense meditation, I am searching you,
Bestow upon me like bee to flower
O Lord Koodala Sangama Deva
Fault is mine, Fault is mine
O God ! O God !

Endowed with knowledge away from all desires
Close to the inner conscience, not worried externally
Like an oyster-shell awaits the pearly drop
With half opened mouth
Even so for your grace I stand and wait,
O Kudala Sangama Deva.

Basavanna is meditating and chanting mantra internally, deep in his heart. On account of knowledge he has not set his organs of sensation to be influenced by anything externally. He is waiting for the graceful blessings of the Mahaguru God, the teacher of the universe as how a shell waits, sailing on the ocean, for a drop of swathi rain. The mind is getting elevated and becoming exuberant. It is venturing to have God's grace and power descended.

Then, suddenly a light appeared. An abounding power was generated in his body when the light took a shape and placed its hands on Basavanna's head. By entering into his body, the light brought in him the immense beatitude.

At the same time an incident took place. Basavanna had been pondered over an important question since many years: "God is formless; how to worship Him ? How to express the devotion ? Man has three organs of sense - the body, speech (language) and mind. One can meditate in mind with the help of a mantra. With the help of Vachanas one can pray. An object is necessary to worship by the hand. If it is in the form- be it a deity in puranas, a plant, an animal or in the form of Mahatmas - it will be against the fact that God is formless and characterless. Then how to give a form to the formless and characterless God ?" One day when Basavanna was in deep thought and looking at the imm- easurable cosmos and the sky, an idea flashed in his mind.

Through deeds the existence and personality of the creator can be understood. This world is the deed of the creator. This is globular in shape. Sphere is the symbol of eternity, endless, void and complete. How will it be if the God, who is endless and timeless is depicted in the form of sphere ? When we see it, there will not be a feeling of male or female. And the picturisation of the forms of Brahma-Vishnu-Maheshwara will not have any meaning. The feeling of endless and infinity will come to mind and its' colour can be made black in order to practice Drishtiyoga by concentrating on it. It's bottom can be made flat allowing it to be stable in the palm. It's size can be of a thumb- the size of soul in the heart. What an excellant imagination !?

It is easy to offer ablution, offerings and other eight fold worship. It can be a suitable object for the practice of Trataka-yoga by concentrating on it. In addition, if anyone who wants to worship- be it a man, a woman, a Brahmin, a sweeper- this can be given. If it is decided that whoever wears this they should not practice discrimination on the basis of caste, colour, class, will enable all to come together, forgetting differences under one common umbrella. This will avoid the tedious visit to the pilgrim centres, waste of money and more over the harassment by the priests. One can worship without the dependency on priests. This can be carried by wearing on the body and one can worship it whenever one desires. What a beautiful, pleasing, new and divine imagination....?! With this imagination, Basavanna's spirit flew high. But how to bring this novel idea into practice? The guru Jataveda Muni belongs to Pashupatha shaiva sect and they worship linga which is installed in the temple. Does he allow to wear it on the body ? If he mistakes me to be an impudent ?

Basavanna had already given a shape to his imagination and had kept the Ishtalinga secretely. But he did not have courage to discuss it with the Guru.

Now time has come to leave the gurukul and start reformations independently. He, deciding within himself to beg for the permission from the creator- God (not from an ordinary Guru), had brought the Ishtalinga (It was called Ishtalinga because it could be worshipped and it fulfills due wishes and also can become due wishing God for the seeker) with him. He was holding it in his hand.

The light, which had taken the shape and had kept its hands on Basavanna's head, entered the Istalinga. The light imbued the divine power into the Ishtalinga to make it divine and powerful and blessed Basavanna as his Guru and disappeared into the void of voids. When God bestowed upon him the grace, Basavanna became all powerful.* 1

Thus, God as a husband Basava as a wife, Panchakshari as the means, pure devotion *2- as holy water Basavanna became Lord's lovely son and Mahaguru.

Later, Basavanna took the Ishtalinga with great reverence (which had originated and assumed a shape in his heart). *3. He became overwhelmingly happy when the idea, which had flashed in his mind not only took a shape but also could get the God's grace and immense power. Tears of joy rolled down his cheeks. The feeling of blessedness was clearly visible on his face. Brilliance was dancing on his face. He expressed his blissful feelings in these lines.

Thy wideness is the wideness of the world
The wideness of the firmament
Ay, wider still
Thy feet go deeper than the cosmos
Ay, higher still
Thou Linga, who art imperceptible
Past understanding and beyond compare
Did come to my palm in a minimised form.

---

*1. From **Harihara's** "Basavaraja Devara Ragale"

*2. Basavanna did not have any ordinary and mortal guru. In case if he had, it would have been depicted in the Vachanas. The creator himself was Basavanna's guru. This is revealed by Siddarameswara in his Vachana.

Thy the creator of thyself Basava
Thy the creator of me Basava
Basava you are the creator for my devotion
O! Kapila Siddamallinatha

*3. Basavanna himself is the architect of Ishtalinga. This is conveyed by **Chamarasa** and others as follows.

He lived like a monk of Guru Linga Jangama.
He found an easy path for all
To have insight into metaphysics.
By giving a symbol representing the absolute
He elevated the seakers of truth
I revere the Basava of Sangama

Our Basavayya brought the Universe
Into a shape and has given a colour
And he has made that colour a reality **-Neelambike**

O! Basava you have turned formless into a form
O! Basava you have made this form
To live in the heart and you have shown it

-Siddarameswara

Bestowed by Shree guru,
And by the union of hand and forehead
He brought the Pranalinga to
The palm with complete understanding
Without being perturbed by inner and outer things
By trust and pride on the linga I bathed in happiness
I enjoy by accepting this Linga O! Lord Linga deva.
The Sadguru has placed the invaluable Linga,
An impossible to Veda and vedanta, in my palm.
Sadguru has brought the indivisible Linga,
Impenetrable by the Omkar and the beauty to the palm.
And has brought an Absolute linga to the palm
Which can't be sensed by mind and speech.
Now I am saved, my ambition is fulfilled
O! Lord Lingadeva

Basavanna's marvellous dream had come true[3].

"Invisible object has rendered itself on my palm
Joyously I play and sing
I behold it till I am satisfied
I worship you wholeheartedly
O Lord Linga Deva.

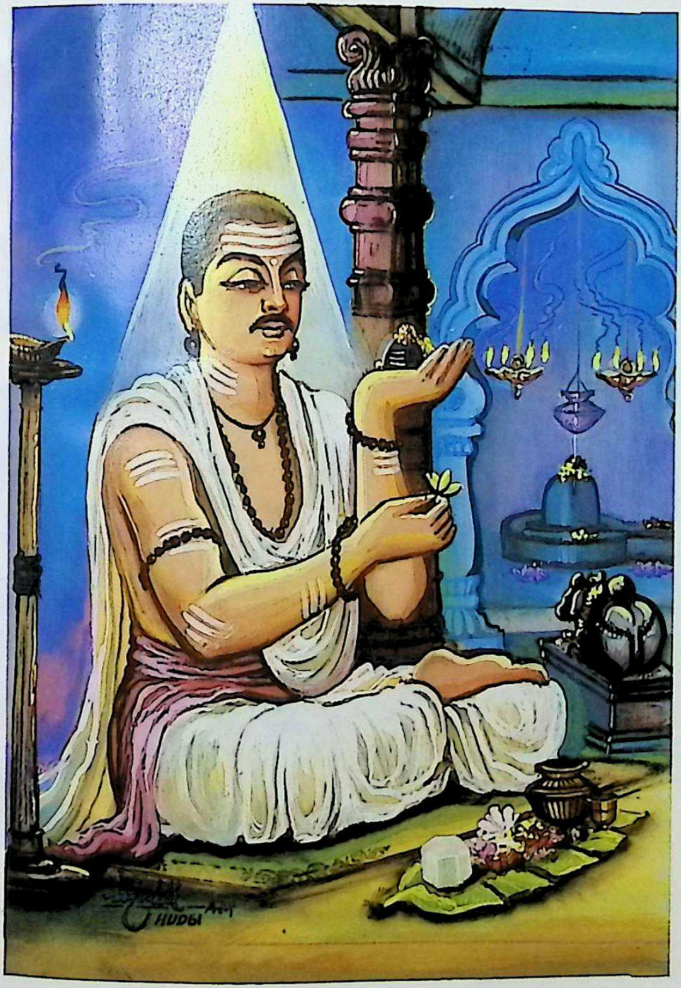
Both, the source of knowledge, that is all pervading God and the supreme light in the lotus of heart have united together and graced Basavanna's palm. This has brought in him a tremendous joy.

O Linga, the source of knowledge and omniscient
You are the supeme light glowing in the lotus of my heart.
You are the companion to grace my palm.
And I have fastened you in my eyes, O Lord Linga Deva.

He places it on his palm and rejoices. Basavanna's ambition was not of a recent one. It had taken a shape since his childhood. It was crystalised some 12 years back and had pervaded all over his body. Now it is fulfilled.

I was waiting just like a
Wife waits for her companion
With her heart open, graced
With meditation, with the lamp
Of knowledge lighted amidst
The calmness with the west door open
My ambition was fulfilled
When you graced the throne of my heart
The worries which were brewing since
Last twelve years are vanished
I am saved as Linga Deva
Has bestowed his grace upon me."

This incident is an epoch making. This has brought Basavanna the enlightment and also crystallised the concept of Ishtalinga. This has transformed Basavarasa into Basavanna of Lord Almightly-Basavalinga. Moreover, this is an important phase in Basavanna's life. Because Basavanna is about to step into the arena of revolution with Lord Sangama as his supporter, guide and the very meditation on Lord Lingadeva as his companion. This is a stage of psychological transformation too. By rejecting the worship of other gods except Shiva, he had embraced the worship of single deity giving an end to polytheism. Now, he is moving from worship of single deity towards the infinite dimension of monotheism and the worship of formless. He has realised that God is not within the four walls of the temple at Koodala Sangama but He is omnipresent



Grace of God showered on Basava with the concept of Istalinga

BASAVANNA'S TWELVE COMMANDMENTS

1. Have faith in creator of this universe believe that he is omnipresent and Supreme power (Basavanna's Shathsthala Vachana -1237)
2. Wear Ishthalinga ,symbol of the creator with great reverence and worship honestly (743)
3. Don't differentiate among those who wear Ishtalinga (717)
4. Treat Vachana literature as religious text (290)
5. Join in the groups of Sharanas during holy congregation (70)
6. Earn wealth through honest and truthful work (708)
7. Consume according to your requirments and contribute the rest to the society through Dasoha (1073)
8. Live morally, do not aspire for other's Wealth, Women and God (676)
9. Never take alcohal and meat (106)
10. Never act in breach of trust (690)
11. Never lose heart while pursuing the path of trust. Live a principled life.(689)
12. Work with a feeling that, there is non lower than me; there is non greater than society of Sharanas (334)

Let us not say, O Lord, 'Whose is he,Whose,O Whose ?

Let them say rather, He is ours, He's ours, he's ours !'

Universal Man Basavanna.

and omnipotent. And he is convinced that:

"Linga is invaluable, immeasurable and invisible
Linga is independent with no beginning and ends
Linga is eternally pure
It is not born from the womb
O! Linga Deva".

Thus, with his own achievement Basavanna got the grace of God and became Mahaguru. There was God's will behind all his works, The poet Harihara reveals this in the following lines.

Worry not my son I come along with you Basava.
I promise you, I will come with you Basava.
My son, the treasure of friendship,
I will follow you my wise son
I just appear if you think of me,
I respond if you just call me
I will be in your mind, hand and the body.
I will stop if you stop and walk if you walk
I will come where ever you go and speak as you speak
Come on ! march ahead my son Basavanna
Become the Lord of this earth and my lovely Basavanna !!

Basavanna thus had the complete blessings of the creator. These lines show clearly that the God was with Basavanna as a companion all along his work.

13. Arrival to Mangalavedhe

With the blessings of Jathaveda Muni and heartfelt farewell from his classmates, Basavanna left the gurukul he spent nearly 8-10 crucial years. In gurukul he moulded his life by gaining knowledge. He came to the gurukul with storm of thoughts in his mind but going out with clear ideas about reformation and integration of the society just similar to a caterpiller which flies out as colourful butterfly after the larva stage.

Kulapathi Jathaveda Muni tells his most favourite disciple Basavanna : "Basavanna, you are not an ordinary person. We don't have the capacity to protest the old establishments and give new vistas to the society though we feel bad about its defects and lacunae. You are not a blind follower but an establisher and worshipper of truth. You were courageous enough to protest injustice even when you were a boy. You have abounding grace of Lord Sangamanatha. I too certainly expect a revolution by you. Go and succeed, you are an invaluable fruit that the huge tree-the human race has ever borne." The guru, by gently rubbing his head with affection, sent him to Mangalavedhe* .

Basavanna got ready to leave Sangama along with

(*Basavanna went to Mangalavedhe, leaving Koodala Sangama in 1155 A.D.-Yuvanama Samvatsara. Later on, Bijjala goes to Kalyana in 1157 A.D., Baladevarasa and Basavanna leaves for Kalyana in 1162 A.D. of Vikramanama samvatsara. I have not discussed this since it is not necessary for a common man.)

his sister Akka Nagalambike. Her husband Shivaswamy stayed back at Brahmapuri, his native, near Kappadi Sangama to look after the family. There were none who were not astonished by looking at Baladevarasa's would-be son-in-law. People hailed Baladevarasa's fortune after seeing the extraordinary brilliance, piousness personality which could be felt by anybody just by looking at Basavanna. The prime Minister Baladevarasa with his collegues in the ministerial cabinets, important persons of the town, welcomed him by a procession. Basavanna entered Mangalavedhe as a Sun entering a place of darkness.

At rise of moon the ocean swells ;
It ebbs at waning of the moon...
When Rahu puts a screen
Before the moon, pray, does
The sea set up a cry ?
And when the Sage drained up the sea,
Pray did the moon come in between ?
Nobody is for anybody, so !
The fallen have no friend !
Thou only, Lord Lingadeva,
Art the world's skin !

14. Matrimonial life

"I started my adult life,
With my head shaven.
I will win the affection of the Linga,
Even if I loose modesty
I will win the affection of the Linga,
Even if I loose the sense of shame.
Let the worldly people laugh and jeer
I salute and surrender at your feet.
O! Linga Deva"

Basavanna is lost in deep meditation even when the wedding is just a few moments away. His prayers are for his ideals and he does not want those to be defeated by matrimonial life. But on the other hand, the worldly people (married ones) are ridiculing him saying that the young Basavanna is meditating as a saint instead of having fun and enjoy the marriage. The wedding got over. There after he started a simple life without even an iota of proudness for getting Baladevarasa as his father-in-law. This is depicted by poet Harihara in his Ragale as follows :

While speaking and walking, saluting the Lord
While dressing and eating, saluting the Lord
While giving and taking, saluting the Lord
While bathing and sleeping, saluting the Lord.

With an entrenched faith in God, Basavanna entered matrimonial life with Neelaganga.

May be, four to five days have passed since their wedding. One day Basavanna speaks to Baladevarasa;

"Dear father-in-law, self earned money is supreme, inherited money is moderate, property from father-in-law through a woman is vile. Wise persons do not want to use others' property. Therefore, I would like to establish and abide by the principle-*Kayakave Kailasa* (Work is the divine bliss).

"Basavanna, am I an alien to you ? Except both of you, who else can use my property....?"

" I don't mean that you are an alien dear father-in-law. I have right to spend only my earnings. Let your belief that only your daughter and I should enjoy your property may change. Since I am capable of working, I shall work and earn my livelyhood. Let your property be utilised for those who are incapable to work, and for service to weaker sections and poor....... .

Work is an essential quality of a man. The following are the characters ought to be found in an ideal and courageous man ;

UDYAMAHA SAAHASA DHAIRYA BUDDHIHI SHAKTIHI PARAKRAMAHA
SHADETHE YATRA VARTHANTHE TATRA DEVAHA SAHAAYAKRUTH

God's grace will be showered only where these six characters are found. From Krutayuga itself the measure of time begins. Will it not be a foul thing if we do not work even when God - the creator of this universe is in action ?"

"Basavanna you are a spiritualist by nature. Lot of time will be wasted if you start working. You may utilise that time in worshipping......."

"It is right father-in-law, but worship is an act for the progress of the soul ; the work is *tapas* of the body, it is for the welfare of the whole and without this work nobody should live. As long as the body, life, mind and soul exist; work, food, knowledge and worship- all are necessary......"

"As you like Basavanna. I can't stand against your wish......."

" Well, tomorrow I will come with you to the palace. But you should not influence in getting a job for me. My own intelligence should get a job. How can a dog, which is carried on the shoulder, catch a rabbit....?"

"Another worry is grubbing my head. My wealth is abundant and Neelaganga is my only daughter. And moreover you are not ready to accept it. There is only one way left out. Let us build free-choultries in four directions and from that money we shall provide food for the visitors. Is it agreeable for you ?"

"In a way it is a betrayal to the State".

"What a strange ! How is it ?"

"If the news that food will be available freely spreads, rogues and idle persons will take shelter and spend time lazilly here. This will be as good as we are giving an easy way to laziness. Instead of this we can make a plan in such a way that the agricultural income and availability of employment should increase and bring work into practice. We can make way for the people to earn their livelihood. In order to understand the value of food, work is essential.."

"Your intelligence is excellent Basaavanna. You are an extraordinary person.....!" exclaimed Baladevarasa.

If seeing the Good, the spirit yearns
And yearns, it will not quench
Your thirst,
If holding out your hand
Towards a palmyra fruit
You upward look, your neck
will surely hurt, dear Sir !
Hear me, Lord Lingadeva,
It 's never to be had
Unless you give !

15. Acceptance of Work : An Accountant Job

The very next day Basavanna went to palace with Minister Baladevarasa. The same morning, Baladevarasa's visit was connected with the accounts section of the palace. Also on the same day the presentation of revenue and expenditure accounts was to take place. He left Basavanna in the account section and went to a room for confidential meeting. He told Basavanna to meet the finance minister Siddharasa when he arrives.

Basavanna got bored sitting alone in the same place for a long time. He raised from his seat and started observing the things around him. He was shocked to notice the bribary and cheating in the section.

Came to the accounts section and sat down
Started observing the busy accountants,
The accounts in the Account books,
And the officers taking bribes.

He was deeply afflicted, he could not bear this and got up.

"Gentlemen, don't denigrade yourselves to such a low level of begging others money by cheating the conscience......" They started giggling in reaction to Basavanna's advice. One of them said ;

" O ! young man, does the salary alone which we get from the State's treasury fill the stomach of our wife and children? I pity you ! It seems still the burden of the family has not yet fallen on the shoulder....."

" May be, but can anyone eat the swallow-wort because of severe hunger ? Can anyone drink poison to quench the severe thirst ?"

"Rice is different from the swallow-wort, poison is different from water, but is bribed money different from salary ? Both come in the form of money minted by the treasury, isn't it ?"

"That's true, but can we treat the guest with lime water since it is also white like milk ? The money which has come from true and prompt labour is like milk and the money got from bribe is like lime water. Honesty in earning, fearless in life are essentials for ideal life. We should not be ignorant of this. Having a feeling ; let it come in any way, is not good...."

By then, all became silent and started working. Siddharasa came to check the accounts. The chief-accountant started presenting the accounts of income and expenditure to the minister. Basavanna noticed a big cheat when the minister was checking the numbers. Though, both the deduction of expenditure from the income and the balance were shown clearly, a big amount was added twice in the expenditure and this was a big deceive to the treasury. Basavanna's mind was irked in an ambiguous situation.

" I have come here in search of a job, now if I tell the truth, who will give me job ? Won't they feel bad about me, thinking that an inexperienced person was alleging the experienced elders ? Won't they consider me as a jealous person ? But what can I do ? My inner conscience does not accept this cheating. I will tell the truth even if it is going to snatch away the chance of getting a job ? This money is people's treasure and should not be misused. Lakhs of people have paid in the form of tax and this should not fill few person's purse. Therefore I will tell what I have seen......" Thus, Basavanna decided and revealed the fact that cheating was being done in the accounts. Siddharasa was stunned. "What a serious allegation this young person is making! In case if he does not prove, it is not only dishonour to him, but also to my friend Baladevarasa. Why did he do this ?" His lips and tongue were dried, he remained silent.

But Basavanna was brimming with confidence. Konde Manchanna was the Chief accountant of the finance section. First he was consternated but recovered enough to laugh merrily.

"Honourable minister, it is Basavanna's impudence. He may be over courageous because he is prime minister's son-in-law. Can the accounts, written by highly experienced experts, be wrong ? It is just a childlishness.... forget it...."

Finance Minister Siddarasa looked at Basavanna. A confidence of proving what he has alleged was clear on Basavanna's face. Siddharasa asked;

"Basavanna, can you prove what you have

alleged?"

"Certainly! See here, a big amount is included twice in the expenditure side and a plan to misuse five-crores of gold coins has been plotted."

Siddharasa called honest accountants and got verified it under the leadership of Basavanna. The plot to misuse five crores of gold coins was confirmed. Siddharasa was wonderstruck by the Basavanna's tremendous knowledge of mathematics and sharp reflection as he had noticed such mistake in the account by just at a glance. He appointed Basavanna as the chief accountant and arranged 101 gold coins per annum as the salary. As he had decided earlier, Basavanna got the job by his brillance.

One still can stand where burnt the hearth :
But could you stand where burnt the earth ?
When the bank, thirsty, drinks the stream,
And the fense turns around the graze,
The wife at home to thievish ways,
And mother's milk to poisionous cream-
And all seems part of a crazy dream-
To whom should I complain O Lord Lingadeva ?

16. Arrival to Kalyana

Keeping Thailapa of Chalukya in house arrest, the King Bijjala gradually became powerful (from 1155 A.D). As he grew stronger, by exhibiting his strength, he started transfering the residences to Kalyana. His trust worthy people also started coming to the capital with him. In this background, the Prime Minister Baladevarasa, Basavanna and their family also entered Kalyana at the dawn on Monday during Shravana of Vikramanama Samvatsara (1160. A.D.)

After shifting to Kalyana, Bijjala started worshipping Shantesha Linga in a special Mantapa located in the pooja room of the palace. One day, when he was worshipping, he found one special and a curious object in the form of a roll. He opened the roll in the light of the lamp. Surprisingly it was a script made up of gold plaque containing some strange etchings. Failing to decipher it, the king called the scholars of the town immediately. Baladevarasa, Konde Manchanna, Narana Kramitha, Peddarasa, Vishnubhatta, Souripeddi and others came in response to king's call and tried to decipher it but in vain.

"Though Basavanna is younger to us, he is intelligent. Why not he also be given a chance to read this ?" Baladevarasa suggested and this was supported by Peddarasa.

" Oh! what an immature suggestion ! When it is impossible for the scholars like us, can Basavanna, an inexperienced, understand it?" Konde Manchanna ridiculed the idea.

"Whoever it may be, it is enough if he reads it. If it is for the good of the state why not it be tried ?" Bijjala responded. Then he sent a message to Basavanna who was working in the accounts section.

When Basavanna arrived, Bijjala explained him the background and said ;

"You can try this Basavanna.."

"As you wish"

He took the roll and before opening it, he prayed in his mind;

My welfare-downfall is yours
My destroyal - progress is yours,
My honour-dishonour is yours
Is fruit (nut) heavier to creeper ? O! Linga Deva.

And he unrolled the golden foil. "Your majesty, this is a mirror image script. It is in old Kannada. We can read this only with the help of a mirror."

A servant brought a mirror when the king signalled. Basavanna deciphered the script with the help of mirror and said ;

"Very happy news Lord...." Bijjala became curious and the people who had gathered became attentive.

"Rathnakara Tribhuvana Malla Permadi Vikramaditya of Chalukayan empire has left 66 crores of gold coins under this throne as savings during his golden era."

"Good, very good......" cheered Bijjala.

"Lord ! this is a lie. It is Basavanna's machination to displace the throne and dethrone you" Konde Manchanna alleged.

"Lord ! If it is a lie, I will give my head, please accept. If it is true then the state will be benefitted." Basavanna said affirmatively. The king Bijjala found 66 crores of gold coins when the place was dug as suggested by Basavanna. There were no bounds to Bijjala's happiness.

"Accept this pearl chain, it is a reward for your intelligence...." Bijjala came forward to give the chain.

"Please excuse me Lord ! Why is this reward for my duty? Don't I take salary from you ?"

"At least you can take a little share from the gold coins you have discovered."

"I could have. But I have no right to accept and you too have no right to give me....."

" You mean....."

" This belongs to the King Vikramaditya because he earned this wealth. But the real owners of this treasure are the people. This can be spent only for their welfare but for nothing else. You may constitute a committee for this and make some arrangements for the development of agriculture, commerce, mass education and other programmes. Today, education and culture have become an asset of few classes. These facilities have to be made available for all..."

"As you wish Basavanna. I entrust that responsibility to you. Prepare a master plan for various programmes as a head of this committee." King Bijjala turned towards Baladevarasa and said ;

"Siddharasa was a highly experienced minister. He was giving you the much needed support. Now enough time has passed since his death. The post of an important minister of treasury has fallen vacant. That has to be given to an intelligent, loyal, prompt and a person of high morale. I have that person in Basavanna. We shall give him the Finance Minister post." Bijjala decided. Wise men felt happy but the crookes were jealous and became highly discontent. Basavanna went to the Royal Palace as a clerk but came back home as a Finance Minister with Royal Emblem. A special welcome was awaiting for him. Akka Nagalambike and wife Neelaganga were at the doorsteps.

" Basavanna how brilliant you are. I am proud of you" said Akka Nagalambike. She welcomed him ceremoniously.

"Dear sister, this is not due to my intelligence. The Lord Almighty has bestowed His grace upon me. Without His grace, can I go higher and higher ?"

When the Lord bestows His grace upon , the wealth follows
It is like a stream flows to fill the pond.
The vicinity of Royal family and the praise, all be won.
And scarcest of grains rush in plenty
When we forget the Lord,
It is like an earthen pot dashed by stone"

Said Basavanna with humbleness. A feeling of complete surrender to God was clearly visible on his face.

17. Thief turns Sharana

One day Basavanna was fast asleep. His betterhalf-Neelagangambike, went to bed after finishing the remaining work in the kitchen. And she too fell asleep immediately since she was tired. At the same time, a thief sneaked into the house and started removing ornaments stealthily from Neelaganga. At the end when he was about to remove her ear-rings, suddenly she was awakened. Seeing the dark face in the lamp light she screamed in fear, "thief ! thief !!" But the thief had ran out. Meanwhile Basavanna was awakened by her shout.

"What happened Neela ? Why did you scream ?" He asked.

"A thief had come ; he had put his hand on my ear"

By then the watchmen had brought the thief. Looking at his wife Basavanna uttered these lines ;

"I believed that you were a wife to be like my ideals,
A virtuous woman to join my life
Alas ! My Lord's hands are pained
Offer the jewels to him.
If a thief enters the house of another thief,
He cannot be anyone but Linga Deva !

Neela, I believed that you would become an ideal wife. But you could not keep that trust alive. You have pained my innocent Lord's hands. Should you not have offered the jewels without screaming after seeing him?" There was an anger in his voice.

"What is this ? voluntarily offering the jewels to a thief!"

"Who is a thief Neela ? Thief is not the one who steals but the one who hides wealth and prompts some one to steal is the real thief. Is he a thief who steals for his needs ? Is not the person who collects wealth more than what he needs, a theif ?

I am the real thief. what do you know about my agony? I want to build a society free from theft, prostitution, exploitation and cheating. This is my aim. I don't know when it will be possible".

He turned towards the thief and said "Brother, since you have come here to steal, it means you are in severe poverty. Otherwise your wife may not have jewels. Take these jewels. Give them to your wife and be happy. If you have poverty sell the jewels and satisfy your needs." Basavanna handed over all the ornaments given by Neelambike. The thief filled with remorse. He sobbed and fell at Basavanna's feet and said" O father please forgive me, consider me as your son."

Basavanna, with immense affection, raised him from his knees. "You are not just my son but also a teacher. You taught simplicity to Neelambike."

Then Basavanna said, "Neela.... accumulation of wealth will cause inequality and imbalance in the society. Today itself, I take a vow to keep nothing for myself or for my children and wife". After this incidence, Neelambike adopted all of his ideals and she became the true companion in Basavanna's great venture.

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18. Establishment of Anubhava Mantapa

Many thoughts, ideals and reforms were taking shape in the kernel of Basavanna's independent intellect. There was a great need for a laboratory in order to execute these ideals and reforms in the society to bring welfare state, which he had dreamt of, into reality. Basavanna wanted to experiment the ideas and reforms, which had taken shape in his heart, in the laboratory before bringing them into practice in the society just similar to a scientist releasing new variety of seeds after thoroughly testing it in the research centre. At this crucial point of time the Anubhava Mantapa was founded. It's main purpose was to give entry to spiritual lives and also by providing the necessary training to spread the religion through missionaries.

The people who wanted to build a state where in all were sharanas and no discrimination on the basis of caste, religion and sect were given whole hearted welcome. After, the people were admitted into the Mantapa, they were all given full freedom of thought, expression and practice in the discourse of knowledge. Basavanna, the founder and the organiser of this Mantapa used to welcome all aspirants whole heartedly by treating each and every one as *Sharanas*. The Principle that `God is one and all are His children' was in real practice.

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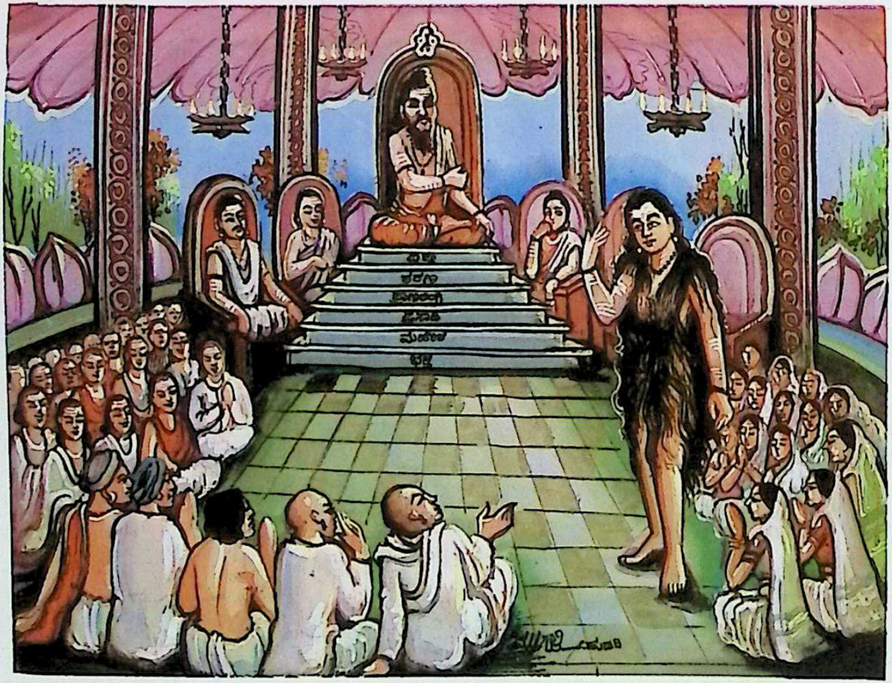
The discourse of knowledge was held everyday-both during morning and the evening. One used to be the chairman of the assembly while others were free to ask any questions on social, moral, spiritual, educational, economical and other fields. Once a particular problem or an issue is brought to the notice of the assembly everyone used to present their arguments in the form of conversation. At the end, Basavanna, Channabasavanna and other learned leaders used to give the issue a concluding answer.

In such Anubhava Mantapa, Basavanna established a symbolic seat (Peetha). It was a symbol of spiritual attainment. He declared that since one can become Guru by knowledge, any body who has attained knowledge could become Guru irrespective of the caste. Therefore he called that seat as *Shoonya Peetha* - the seat of perfection - the throne of infinity - the symbol of the highest experience of oneness with God - and declared that any eligible person could occupy that peetha. There was a necessity for an able person to occupy this chair and manage the whole affairs of the Mantapa and give guidence to all. When Basavanna was waiting enthusiastically for the arrival of such a person, the great virtuous Allama Prabhu came to Kalyana. Basavanna's long standing desire was fulfilled when he handed over the complete responsibility of the peetha to Allama Prabhu.

Many people started coming to Anubhava Mantapa from all over the country. The most famous among those virtuous persons were Shivayoga Samrata Allama Prabhudeva, Vairagya Nidhi Akka Mahadevi, Kayakayogi Siddarameswara, Jnana Bhandari Channa Basavanna, Krantiveera Madivala Machidevaru. If Basavanna was like a soul then these five stalwarts were like the five vital breath. Some seven hundred seventy staunch devotees who had conquered the fear of death and lakhs of followers had also assembled here.

Since Basavanna declared the equality of women and gave religious initiation to all and allowed them to participate in the discourses held at Anubhava Mantapa, there emerged sixty noted *sharanes* (Women devotees). Among them 30 Sharanes wrote Vachanas. Thus, the Anubhava Mantapa became the first parliament in the world. Basavanna shone as its soul and spirit. Allama Prabhudeva became its *head*, Siddarameswara its *life*, Chennabasavanna its *heart*, Akka Nagalambike and Neelagangambike its *eyes*, Machideva and Moligeya Marayya its *arms* and Akka Mahadevi its *nose*. Thus they shone as different vital organs of the Mantapa. Basavanna's residence *mahamane* was as broad as his heart. It had the Magnanimity of giving shelter to all who came there and it became the centre for distribution of food (called Dasoha) to Sharanas and Sharanes. Along with the distribution of food there was also sharing of knowledge. We get many ideas if we ponder over the question-`why was it named Anubhava Mantapa ?' The essence of Basavaism is the firm belief in God. On the


ಐಕ್ಯ
ಶರಣ
ಪ್ರಾಣಲಿಂಗಿ
ಪ್ರಸಾದಿ
ಮಹೇಶ
ಭಕ್ತ

Arrival of Akkamahadevi at Anubhava Mantapa

SOME DATES OF IMPORTANCE

1. It was on Monday Shravana shuddha month of Vikranama year i.e, 1160 A.D. that Basavanna arrived at Kalyana after leaving Mangalavedhe .
2. Through propagation of religion, invitation ceremonies (Deeksha Samskara) and other activities were being carried out the Institution of Anubhava Mantapa came to estabished 9 years later in the Sarvadhari-Virodhi year i.e., 1169 A.D.
3. Channabasavnna known as Chinmaya Jnani was born in the Vyshaka month of Nadananama year - 1172 A.D.
4. Allama Prabhu and Siddhrameshwara arrived in Krodhinama year i.e., 1184 A.D.
5. Establishment Shoonya Peetha (the throne of void) - the pulpit of the Anubhava Mantapa and its functioning began on Ugadi of Chaitra Shuddha month of Viswavasu i,e, 1185 A.D.
6. It was on the Panchami day of Karthika shuddha month of Rakshasa nama year i.e.,1195 A.D. that Channabasavanna succeeded Prabhudeva and ascended Shoonya Peeta .
7. The order of banishment made against Basavanna for having conducted the marriage of the out-caste boy with the bride of the highest caste, was complied with on the Dwadashi day of Phalguna month of Rakshasanama year.
8. Haralaiah, Madhuvarasa and Sheelavanth weere arrested .
9. They were executed (through YELE HOOTE Punishment) on the Chaturdashi day.
10. Bijjala was killed by Jagadeva Mallideva and Bommanna on Holi Hunnime (Full Moon day) 1196 A.D

basis of this belief all other principles and ideals are built. The God, conceived by Anubhava Mantapa, is beyond the bounds of speech and mind. He is beyond the perception, reasoning and scriptural knowledge ; but can be ascertained in the heart. The only way to experience Him is through mystic experience. Therefore Basavanna had cherished a strong feeling in him that the Mantapa should be `built' on the basis of mystic experience (Anubhava), which is an essence of Dharma. Hence the name Anubhava Mantapa.

The plate wherefrom we eat,
And the mirror we look
Are one and the same,
Of the same metal
Same size and shape ;
You rub it-lo ! a mirror shows !
A sharana if one knows ; if one forgets,
An ordinary man : do thou,
Forgetless, worship the Lord Lingadeva !

19. Accusation of Misuse of Treasury

Just like bees throng flower garden, the people, who were yarning to be liberated from mundane existence, thronged to Kalyana even from far off places like Anga, Vanga, Kalinga, Gurjara, Brahamdesha, Kashmeera, Simhala. They all had not only surrendered completely to the divine and lofty personality of Basavanna but were also strongly impressed and influenced by his principles. Therefore, they naturally stayed in Kalyana. *Sharanas,* after becoming Basava follower, travelled length and breadth of the country and propogated the Basava religion. The untouchables, shudras, exploited lots who were all reformed by the *sharanas* came to Anubhava Mantapa and bettered their lives.

Basava followers, as Harihara puts it, "had enough food and clothes. If this is about their personal matter, in addition to this, they used to carryout *Dasoha,* social service and other economic programmes every day. They regularly attended the discourses at Anubhava Mantapa" Some people in the state administration like Konde Manchanna and others could not tolerate the Basava followers leading a content life. They felt jealous about Basavanna and they lied in wait to blemish Basavanna's reputation and remove him from the position.

"Basava followers are leading a happy and content life ! How do they get money ? When the poverty could not be removed even when the people work day and night, the secret of this content life is your treasury" they complained before the king Bijjala. His mind was poisoned and suddenly the king called for an enquiry doubting the misuse of treasury and he sent the message to Basavanna. Basavanna was pained that `the king had lent his ears to back biting'. He handed over the accounts of income -expenditure and the balance money to the king.

Bijjala became very happy when he learnt that the treasury had an unprecedented high revenue and was full. He came to know that the revenue flowed into the treasury was much higher than what used to be during the periods of Basavanna's predecessors. Income-expenditure accounts were absolutely correct.

"O! great Basavanna you have achieved what the most learned and seasoned finance ministers could not do in the past. The treasury is overflowing. What is the secret of this ?"

"O! king Bijjala, the secret lies in the mantra- 'Work is divine bliss'. The earth is rich and gives suitable rewards if we work hard. God has not given just a mouth to eat but two hands to work. If a person works for twice the amount what he consumes, the opulance in the State is natural. Laziness is the cause for all sufferings. Who ever it may be my followers, they all work honestly. 'Avoidance of observance can be endured but not the avoidance of work'- this is my doctrine. Therefore the promptness in the work or the work-culture is the main mantra for the progress of the country. Secondly, my followers retain only that much which is required for them and distribute the remaining to others through *Dasoha.* I have inculcated in them the honesty in paying the taxes. Not only Sharanas are leading this pure and true life among themselves but they are also teaching others and trying to develop the same feelings in them. Therefore the state has progressed in all respects and has attained tremendous success."

"Oh ! Basavanna what a strange person I am ! I doubted a virtuous person like you by lending my ears to the slanders. Please forgive me...."

"Keep that aside Maharaja,

When a stream of milk runs before the town
Why should I run behind a vile cow ?
Why lose modesty and bashfulness ?
When the Lord Linga Deva is with us
Why should I need Bijjala's treasury ?

I have imbibed the above principle. My desciples also are of the same principle. They have pledged to lead a pure and honest life. They are not like the ones who earn money in any ways and go on pilgrimage to dip in rivers and ponds under the illusion that all of their sin would be washed away. They have believed that principle and honest work is itself a worship and work is worship . If they are content and happy it is because of their honest work"

"Basavanna I beg you whole heartedly to forgive me. Moreover, I have a proposal and I place it before you. It has been a long time since your father-in-law Baladevarasa has passed away. I have kept that position vacant for not finding a suitable person. Now I have learnt that you are the only suitable person to occupy that position. The work will be done by those persons who yearn for people's welfare and not for position. Superior service can be expected if a person with sense of nationality, people loving and service oriented holds the power."

"That's all true Maharaja. I do not work to please any section of the society. I work for the welfare of the people. It hurts me a lot if you believe slanders and unnecessarily doubt me even when I am living according to these lofty ideals. I accept the power considering it as means to serve but not to hold on to it.

Your majesty, having an ambition to become a honest public servant, I take the oath in the name of God;

Brushing my eyes after I get up in the early morning,
And if I yearn for food, jewels
For my wife and children, I give
My head, I give my head."

Your majesty, life of a civil servant is like a pure white cloth. With great care it has be to protected. In the same way I protect my life with honesty and principles. I avow in God's name and in the name of sharanas not to hoard even a speck from the gold, a grain from rice, a thread from cloth for tomorrow and the future.

Apart from this, I serve you dedicating myself completely because you are not just a person but a powercentre which rules the people. Whatever the work it may be, I assume it for the welfare of the people and do it with all dedication.

Be it even theft, I take the lead
Be it even imprisionment, I go first
If I waver or fear at anytime
Or if I do not endorse the ruler's step
I give my head, I promise
O! Linga Deva.

Whatever the work you do for the welfare of the State ; be it a theft, I take the lead and carry the tools to drill a hole. If you are ready for the imprisonment for the good of the public, I go prior to you. I will never hesitate to sacrifice. I respect the king who rules the State".

After listening to Basavanna's words whick hearlded the laughty principles, patriatism, Bijjala became overwhelmingly happy. He placed the Royal emblem of Prime Minister- the crown -on Basavanna's head and gave the sword which was the epitome of power and embraced him with all pride and tears of joy in his eyes.

Basavanna was moved by Bijjala's affection and pride on him. He was astonished to realise God's grace turning the allegation which lashed on him as a thunder bolt into a garland of honour, progress and elevation. The allegation came. as a poison but turned into ambrosia. Anger became affection and blame turned into a felicitation. How miraculous God's grace is ! He uttered a Vachana;

By Thy grace even the dry twig
Become green and sprouts afresh
By Thy grace anything sterile becomes fertile
By Thy grace will poison itself turn into nector
By Thy grace all things become
Profuse and abundant, O Lord Linga Deva"

The back biters were thoroughly disappointed and their faces were sullen when the King Bijjala showered lot of affection on Basavanna. They went to throw a snake on Basavanna, but only to see it turning into a garland. They were bewildered.

Bijjala said ; "Basavanna, I have given all power and chance to punish them. You can punish these back biters as you wish for their attempt to put a false charge on you."

" Your Majesty, my ambition is to convert the sinners but not to destroy them. I pray the God for them and may God showers His grace on them to transform their hearts. I hope they will understand me in a right way."

"Your generosity and magnanimity are limitless Basavanna. You are not only an embodiment of knowledge but also an embodiment of virtues !..." Bijjala exclaimed.

Thus Basavanna ascended to a highest political position.

20. Kambali Nagideva's incidence

Basavanna's responsibility increased day by day. He launched multifaceted programmes aimed at material, moral, intellectual, mental & spiritual advancement of the people as a whole. He instrumentalised a programme to inculcate ideals in every individual and society. In addition to these, very often he used to visit different places and try to find out the problems of the people.

Just as a routine visit, Basavanna was coming on the royal horse in the Maaheswara colony (Basavanna used to call the untouchables as Maaheswaras or great sharanas hence their colony was named as Maaheswaras colony). As Basavanna was just passing by, a bell sound was heard from a Sharana Kambali Nagideva's house. Along with this, a pleasant fragrance of frankincense sailed across. A melodious chanting of Vachanas confirmed the ongoing pooja in Nagideva's house. Basavanna was overwhelmed. He noticed cleanliness, morality, religiousness filled in the colony. Basavanna had already realised that if the downtrodden-untouchables could progress, the development in the other sections of the society will be sponteneous. Therefore he had toiled for the betterment of the untouchables and he had succeeded in the venture. When he was delighted listening to the chanting of Vachanas, he could not resist his curiosity. He got down from the horse and entered into Kambali Nagideva's house.

Nagideva, who was captivated by Basavanna's unexpected visit, came out and welcomed Basavanna. Basavanna happily embraced Nagideva and uttered "My life and the revolution became meaningful. Nagideva, today I would like to have food in your house...."

"Basavanna, what a peculiar desire ? Don't you know that I am a Holeya (un untouchable) by birth ?"

"May be, but other the religious initiation the attached caste will be absolved and you have got new birth. When different woods are burnt, all their uniqueness will also be burnt and just reduced to ashes. Similarly due to the initiation all the castes will be abolished and attain Sharanatva (means becoming true divine being not considering for being subjected to the differentiation of caste, creed, sex etc) You have become Sharana, a true devotee of God through your righteous and virtuous characters. You have got that virtue which is dear to Shiva, Your status of Holeya has already been absolved. It is my duty to dine with the people who have got the religious initiation."

After the pooja, Basavanna had food in Nagideva's house. The other ministeral colleagues, court officials, who had accompanied Basavanna during the town visit, ran to the palace and told Bijjala above Basavanna's move "Your majesty, Basavanna has taken food in a Holeya's house; By this he has lost his caste sanctity.

When he come to the royal court he will spoil our caste superiority also.".

Bijjala's hurried call reached Basavanna. As soon as Basavanna arrived, Bijjala asked :

"Basavanna, is it true that being a Brahmin by birth you had food in a Holeya's house?"

" Maharaja, it is true. But Kambali Nagideva is not a Holeya. He has received Istalinga through religious consecration and has become sharana by religious sanctification through *Lingadeeksha* (initiation). Thus, we both are of same status in this respect and dining together is not wrong at all. infact it is a religious duty, it is a formula, manthra for the unity and integrity of the followers of the same religious society."

"Is it not an offence Basavanna ?" No, your Majesty. I am not like those hypocrites who call themselves holy and consider these people as holeyas by rejecting and distancing them in the day time but wander in pariah colony during night. I saw talent and vigour in these people who were illtreated and ignored from contacts, and I have by giving the much needed initiation and enabled them, to become virtuous people. I can prove their genuinity if it is given a chance, you may examine this..."

Immediately Nagideva was summoned. Nagideva with a propitious look on this face entered the royal court. *

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* **Harihara says :** Milk flowed when Nagideva's toe was cut and worms cameout when the fanatic's finger was cut)

He offered his salutation to Basavanna and the king. A fanatic who was seated in the court stared at Nagideva. Bijjala offered a seat to Nagideva and very closely observed him. Due to his pure and truthful work, daily worship, righteous life and true thoughts, Nagideva's face was radiant. Bijjala was taken aback and wondered ; " Why upper caste people call these people Holeyas and treat them worst than animals ? He felt like salutimg him whole heartedly looking at his virtuous appearance. He was unable to argue anything neverthless by trying give all seriousness to his position, Bijjala said;

"Honourable minister, Nagimayya (Nagideva) has come, and also the Prime Minister Basavanna is present here. You can present your argument.

" You damn Holeya, your....."

When the court official started spellings Nagideva interrupted him and said ; "My brother don't you know our great teacher Basavanna has 'taught courtesy is heaven; discourtesy is hell '? These condemning words should not come from the persons like you. We are not holeyas. Please look here, our clothes are not dirty. Words are not filthy and inner conscience is not polluted."

"Shut up ! We are of the higher strata. How arrogant you must be to teach me. Am I expected to address this idiot as sir or lord ?"

Unperturbed Nagideva replied "Look here sir, if it was the wish of the God to keep our mouth shut, he should have not given the strength to speak. Is it not the proof that the very fact we have mouth means we have the right to speak ?"

"Very fine ! have these utterly worthless people learnt to argue? The time has become bad. It's allright. Is it true that our esteemed Prime Minister has taken food in the house of such a despised person like you?"

"Honourable Sharana....." Nagamayya was interrupted.

"Stop it ! Don't use that dirty corrupt word to address me. You address me only as Vodeya (master)"

"Please excuse me ! We have only one master ; the master of the universe -God. All are His children and we don't call any one else as master...."

"Did you see this my Lord? What a loudness ! What else can happen if the religious initiation is accorded to 'donkeys' who don't know the difference between the upper caste and the lower caste ?"

"Superiority comes not because of caste but from the principles and spiritual attainment. Basavaprabhu is our great guru who has given us religious initiation. Now I am a follower of Basavaism. I am like his son and it is true that he performed pooja and he has taken food in my house. That is my fortune. What is wrong in it...?

"Hold your tongue ! What nonsense are you talking? You are a holeya - belonging to the lowest caste.

Even if your shade falls on us we have to bathe thrice. My lord, can Basavanna, a Brahmin by birth, take food in such person's house ? Should have not Basavanna known about this ? Should not this fellow have sense?"

"Look here sir, we have true and pure practices at home. We don't take even water before bath and pooja. We don't take non veg-food and liquor. We perform pooja thrice a day and only after pooja we take food. We are not less than any Brahmins in practicing religious rights and norms. Then why the food in our house be impure....?"

"What is your opinion, Basavanna ?" asked Bijjala.

"Your majesty, it is inhuman, heinous to divide the society into upper and lower stratas and treat some people even worst than animals. This is an insult to the God's creation. I have accorded the religious initiation to Shudras and the outcastes i.e. the untouchables. What is the transformation this has brought about in them? What is the progress they have achieved ? It will be surprising to know about it . One will become angry about those who have exploited these people for the centuries. It is for the good of all if the wrongs of the past are corrected now. Please look at Kambali Nagideva. How brilliant and humble in his speech and what a divine glow he has in his eyes ! Only those who are inflicted by prejudice can call them Holeya and low caste people. Otherwise, if we look at them, in what way are they lower than us ? Many people have believed that a Shudra's tongue ineligible for literature. Didn't you see Nagimayya's eloquent speech? Is it not compre-hencible from the speech of Nagimayya that he is noble, cultured and superior and from the speeches of our colleagues, they are uncultured ? Please you may decide on your own by considering the facts. We and Nagimaiah are religiously equal. Food in his house is the most pure and it is Shiva's oschafe"

Bijjala agreed with what Basavanna said. The king was moved by the argument. He said "It is true Basavanna. Refined and sweet words were spoken by Nagideva; worms like bad words came out from our court officials. One can evaluate the personalities from the words they speak just similar to knowing the health and other problems of the stomach by seeing the tongue. Really, Nagideva is the most noble person". Bijjala appreciated Nagideva and offered gold coins, silk clothes and fruits in a plate.

"My lord, please dont mistake me and donot consider me as a rude. We can use only those which earned by the work. Therefore I don't want gold coins. I use only those clothes which are woven on my own in the afternoon, hence I don't want silk clothes. Since our great king is offering, I will just take the fruits, Please have mercy".

``Basavanna, I am fortunate, I am really fortunate. How valuable jems and pearls your devotees are! Today I got the most fortunate moment to see this noble person.

The name of our town Kalyana will become immortal. Not only you have become great but you have tried to elevate others to that greatness. That is really stupendous." And the king turned to Nagideva and said:

"Nagideva, you will be taken to your house by our Royal Palanquin. Please don't feel bad for testing you."

"It is not a test at all my Lord, It is just an affectionate interview. I could get opportunity and privilege to speak to you. May God bless you with long life."

Basavanna became overwhelmingly happy. His eyes were moistioned by joy. He turned towards Bijjala and uttered;

Look at their house, they 're poor indeed
Look at their heart, they 're great
Their simple touch is bliss,
They're brave from top to toe.
There is nothing for exhibition
but only for the hour that comes
Linga deva's Sharanas are brave and free.

My life is like a dog
Licking a swords's sharp edge
For ghee !
My mind will not forsake
The bother of this world !
O Lord Lingadeva,
Out of thy mercy, rid
Me of this doggish life !

21. The dream comes true

Basavanna wanted to build an ideal society. And hence he started experimenting on the basis of religion in the Anubhava Mantapa. When he became the Prime Minister, it enabled him to implement this in all embracing scale in the society Recognition of low and high based pm caste; occupation based concepts of superiority and inferiority based on occupation and determination of status on the basis of wealth had no place in the community of the followers of Basavanna. It was considered that all were children of God and hence equal. Once the people come to this fold of society, they would be absolved of all the attached castes of the past. And they also would to be devoted and attain the state of being Sharana just similar to how the rivers lose their form, taste and colour once they join ocean and become one with it.

All the followers of Basavaism never touched anything which they did not earn by work. Each and everyone earned money by dedicated work. They lead a very simple life. sufficing the daily necessities they used to distribute the remaining wealth to the society through *DAASOHA*.

Proliferation of religion and education became possible after Jangama system (Missionary system) was started by Basavanna. Though these Jangamas were like the Bhikkus of Buddha there were many differences.

Some Jangamas were married. They used to spread the religion by giving discources on practises and philosophy of Basavaism. They used to maintain their families with the help of rewards or donations received in return for their work. These were called *SABHAARI JANGAMAS.* Other Jangamas were unmarried and yearning for salvation. They were not tied by any worldly desires. They were called *NIRABHARI JANGAMAS.* They never used to stay in any place for a long time. They used to be always moving from one place to another like- these were called *CHARA JANGAMAS* (means moving Jangamas). After spreading the religion in different places, they used to appoint Jangamas permanantly in such of those places to guide the converted people by preaching them the essence of the religion and helping them to practice it. The most learned and virtuous *Chara Jangamas* used to visit their centres and guide them regularly. Basavanna describes these in his Vachana "the preachings of Guru is like a doctor's treatment and preachings by Jangama is like a surgeon's operation." The *CHARA JANGAMAS* are like today's visiting professors and visiting surgeons.

The status of Jangama was not decided on the basis of caste but on the basis of spiritual knowledge. Only those who had become superior by spritual attainment were and dedicated to spread the religion were called Jangamas. The most important and remarkable works taken up by the *Sthira Jangamas* included the establishement of *saale*(School) matts and *Dasoha* matts. The sthira jangamas used to collect children and were given education in these saale matts. They used to collect funds, materials and grains from the people and arrange food and other comforts to the travellers and pilgrims at dasoha matts. Such Dasoha mutts can still be seen on the ways to well known pilgrim centres.

The road to Srishaila is tough, terrible and one has to pass through forests. Even these terrible roads we can find Dasoha matts. Still we can see the swami's of Basava tradition rendering their invaluable services in Dasoha Centres.

Apart from these service centres, Basavanna had also established Satyagraha centres to cleanse the society. There were some groups called Ganachari groups. If any immoral act is committed by an individual or a mass of people, these Ganachari Jangamas used to go to them and undertake fasting. In order to arouse the public awareness and bring them to the moral path the Ganachari Jangamas used to hug up pillars of the sinners, houses or stand with a heavy boulder on their head or stand on nails fixed to wooden planks or stand with iron needles pearced a cross their mouth.

Basavanna employed some programmes for recreations and some for enrichment of knowledge. There were primely fun-fairs, fancy dresses, folk dances, singing vachanas. Jangamas used to entertain the people by telling humurous stories, exhibiting different episodes of history, Purana-epics through fancy dress, presenting the stories of sharanas by folk dances and singing vachanas with music. Thus, the Jangama system (missionary system) came into being in different forms and became the means for the overall development of the society. When the great virtuous Allamaprabhu became aware of all these things he was attracted by Basavanna's tremendous achievements. He moved towards Kalyana. On the way he met Siddarameswara and took him also to Kalyana.

The town Kalyana was the centre of the movement, and Anubhava Mantapa had become a platform for the revolution. To that lamp, Basavanna poured the oil of religious values and gave the `wick' of morality. The lamp glowed with immense light. All those who wanted to make their lives divine assembled at Kalyana.

Kalyana Rajya (Welfare State) fashioned by Basavanna was highly meaningful Akkamahadevi describes it in these words:

> Others should not go to Kalyana,
> It is impossible !
> Those who have not renounced the worldly desires should never go there.
> Kalyana is not the place for egoistic ones
> Kalyana is not the place for those
> Who are not pure both in and out.
> With blessings of Channa Mallikarjuna
> I conquerred all attachments and am able to see Kalyana.
> My salutations to Kalyana !

These are the qualifications to enter Kalyana ! First of all, Kalyana is the kingdom of God and secondly it is an ideal society established by Basavanna. Therefore in order to get the membership of Anubhava Mantapa these are the characters one should possess.

What are the essential qualities to build a welfare state ? There should not be any desires & temptations. The personal desires should be sacrificed for the welfare of all. One should be attached to the ideals without being attracted by the desires. One should lead a holy life both internally and externally. The one who wants to build a welfare state should become selfless and surrender to the society. It is difficult to build a welfare state if one has self pride, which is also dangerous to the society. All these are the qualities the socialism. Since Basavanna's socialism was fashioned with a spiritual background knowing one's own-self was also equally important. The development of ones own inner knowledge was as important as the development of the wealth of the society and the Nation.

Not only these, there was no discrimination between man and woman. There was equal opportunity for both to develop and progress . There is no room for exploitation of weaker section. There is no feeling that man was independent and woman was dependent. This type of ideal society which has equal opportunity for all is the welfare state. Basavanna succeeded in building such a welfare state.

22. The Incident of Thieves stealing the cattle

Many people were envious of Basavanna raising to the highest level of Prime Minister as an able administrator, a great guru and a great virtuous personality. Very often the incidents of either provoking or demoting him were happening. But all those incidents used to disappear into the air as the ice dissolves itselves in the effort of cooling the Sun.

Once when cow-herds had taken the cattle of Mahamane (Basavanna's residence) to the field, thieves attacked them and drove the cattle along with them. The innocent cow-herds came to Basavanna and complained about the incident ; "Lord, thieves have taken away the cattle, please give us the army, we will bring them back ". Basavanna with the usual calmness and smile on his face said :

Don't say thieves have taken the cattle
Don't cry, don't shout
It is God who takes milk there
and also here
Linga Deva is the one here and there.

"Don't say that thieves have taken the cattle. The one who takes the milk there and here is the same! I Don't have anything which is mine. It is the wealth of the people and it has reached them.."

Madivala Machideva was astonished and said." My Lord Basavanna, this is not an act of common thieves

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Madivala Machideva was astonished and said." My Lord Basavanna, this is not an act of common thieves but a political machination. This is a conspiracy of your enemies."

"Even if it is so, you should not get irated Machaiah! Fire will not extinguish if fire is added to it. Cold water is needed to put off fire. Enemity will not go by enemity. Enemity can be removed by love only"

Then Basavanna turning to the cow-herds, said;

"Let that be apart. By now, calves may be hungry. They might have been dissappointed for their mothers not coming back. Take these calves on cart and leave them with their mothers"

Not finding any other way, the cow-herds carried the order. But in the next morning, the thieves brought the cattle back and cried falling on Basavanna's feet and repented for their act. They felt unhappy for committing this act involving themselves with political conspiracy. They took the initiation and became holy disciples of Basavanna.

I have a thought, it has another !
This way I pull, it pulls that way !
It grates amd frets me, too,
To toil and moil ;
And when I long to meet
Lord Lingadeva,
It casts a darkness on my path,
This Maya !

23. The Philosopher's Stone

Those who could not tolerate the progress of Basavanna, made several attempts to kill him. Once, a butcher by name Bhadra, who was provoked by political animosity, sneaked into Basavanna's Mahamane. He hid himself in darkness. When Basavanna fell asleep, Bhadra moved out from the hidden place to kill him. But before he could stab, he saw Basavanna in the lamp light and was moved by that glimpse. "How can I kill Basavanna, who toils day and night for the welfare of the exploited lot?" His conscience did not allow him to kill Basavanna. He repented for what he had decided and fell on the feet of Basavanna, who woke up and enquired.

"Who are you ?"

"I am Bolla, people also call me "Bhadra-a butcher"

"Why did you come here ? Do you want any help? Are you suffering from poverty ?"

"No my Lord. By your grace the poverty is gone. I am not poor but a traitor. I am a traitor. I had come here to kill you on political conspiracy my Lord..."

" Do you get benefit if you kill me ?"

" It was my ignorance that I had come to kill the divine lamp of the welfare state and the fortune of the poors. Pardon me my Lord and give me a chance to serve you ".

"Ah ! can a butcher like you be appointed for service ?" a guard said.

Basavanna replied.

"My dear guard, water solidifies and becomes pearl but it can never become water again. Milk becomes ghee but ghee can never become milk again. From here onwards my dear Bhadra will be my body guard." Basavanna filled in him the confidence by patting him with affection.

Basavanna's hand had a magical touch. It's power and the divinity behind it used to change wordly men into sharanas (devotees of God)

Kamadhenu[1] may be in the form of a cow
but it is not merely a cow.
Kalpavriksha[2] may be in the form of a tree'
but it is not merely a tree
Chintamani[3] may be in the form of a stone
but it is not merely a stone
Marujavani[4] may be in the form of grass
but it is not merely grass

He is varily the epitome of devotion and reminder of all earthly attachments.

Knowing this, folk poets sang the following song.

There is nothing that Basavaiah of Kalyana does not know
He flooded the land with divine light
People sing his glory with pride

---

1. The legendary cow of plenty whose capacity to grant boons is inexhaustible.
2. A heavenly tree which grants all desires.
3. Talisman - A stone which protects from dangers
4. A legendary grass bring back lost life.

Basavanna was not only in the highest position in the political field, but also he succeded in cleansing the mind of an Indian religious person. He was an extraordinary person with divine power. He not only attained salvation but was also a virtuoso prophet in leading others to achieve complete attainment. There is a practice of putting him in *Bhakti Sthal* (state of devotion) in ascending orders of *Shat sthal* (6 steps towards salvation). But this is not the first step of the ascending order. After having ascended all the 6 steps of the *Shat Sthala* he descended and stood on this *Bhakti Sthal.* It is a super *Bhakthi sthal* (Great state of devotion). Each one of *Sharanas* adopted the special features of each steps of *Shat Sthal.* The great devotee Ajaganna reached the highest-the *Aikya Sthal* (the last step in the *Shat sthal*) and stayed in that state of silence. But even after reaching that state Basavanna did not stay there. He thought that it was not sufficient if he alone attains the salvation and hence decided to lead others to that exalted position. So, he came down from that supreme position and stood at *Bhakti Sthal* and ventured to bring down the divinity to this world. Basavanna with an extraordinary spiritual capability and uncomparable personality, has been described as capable of miracles in epics. Miracles can be interpreted as extraordinary divine happenings. Basavanna did not make miracles for any cheap popularity or for money and he never performed them purposefully and tactically to get flattered by his followers.

He has done miracles with lot of human affection and compassion, and only to glorify God's power. His own vachanas stand as testimony to his miracles.

> Brothern, may be, owing to some oblivion in previous life.
> That I am born new in your midst as per the play of
> Almighty and
> That I composed and recited a Lakh and
> Ninety six thousand songs and verses
> That I gave life to three hundred and sixty carcasses
> That I won the battle of allegations in the
> Royal court thirty six times ;
> That I resorted to miracles
> Eighty eight times and praised
> The great devotees for end in this mundane world...

Basavanna tells in this Vachana that he had done 88 miracles, answered 36 complainers and kept the enemies silent and got back the lives of 360 carcasses. What Basavanna performed as miracles are also of rational nature. Without interpreting them with superstitious beliefs and blind faith, if we look at these with critical bent of mind, we see more rationality. We shall interpret some of them.

1. The miracle of saving Chaama

It was alleged that Basavanna himself had pushed Chaama into pond. Later, Chaama coming out alive responding to Basavanna's call : "Chaama, come out and tell the truth" can be interpreted as follows;

By nature Basavanna was brave. When Chaama slipped into the pond, he might have jumped into the water and dragged him out and gave him the first aid.

Seeing their son coming alive, the parents must have uttered : "You have saved our son miraculously". What is surprising in it ?

2. The miracle of turning jower into pearl

This is a special miracle and very popular among people about Basavanna. The speciality of this is that he turned the jower grains into pearls by just touching them. This looks like a miracle if depicted as a wonder happening of divine power and looks like revolutionary if it is examined with rational view. A royal guest once came to Basavanna's residence Mahamane. While having food, he had left some food in the plate. This made Basavanna unhappy. He arranged to serve the guest with a plate full of pearls the next time. The guest was shocked and asked, "Why is this?" Then the servitors replied, "Pearls are very valuable". "May be, but are they eatable ? However rich he may be, man eats only grains of jower, rice, but not the pearls", the guest said angrily. Then Basavanna appeared infront of him and said.

"My dear guest, our country can survive without pearls but not without rice ; grains are more valuable than pearls. Can we afford to waste it so carelessly ?"

The guest was taught a lesson ; then he must have uttered " Basavanna you are a miracle person and gave the jower the value of pearl."

3. The Miracle of bringing 12000 Jangamas in a bag

Mahadeva Bhoopala of Sapadalaksha, in Kashmir

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Kingdom, was providing free food for innumerable number of Jangamas everyday. Taking shelter under king's magnanimity, many yogis, saints, pious persons were living happily by praising him. During the same time the Anubhava Mantapa was established at Kalyana by Basavanna. And he travelled different parts of the country to spread his message.

With this background, a discription of a miracle appears. It is as follows : After knowing that there were 12000 Jangamas with Mahadeva Bhoopala, Basavanna set out towards that place. In order to attract them to his Jangama Dasoha, Basavanna brought all those 12000 Jangamas in a bag which he had carried with him. The king was astonished When he learnt about the incident. He and his wife Gangadevi were practicing a right. According to that they should not have food without feeding Jangamas. The couple started suffering without food since all the Jangamas were taken by Basavanna . When the minister did not find even one Jangama in Sapadalaksha, he obviously became more worried. He rushed to Kalyana on a horse and requested Jangamas to come back. But they decline to do so. The Jangamas said, that they were happy here. When the Minister did not succeed in pursuading the Jangamas to get back to Sapadalaksha, out of desperation, he sent a slayer to kill Basavanna. But the very glimpse of Basavanna had transformed the slayer. Throwing the dagger away, he fell on to Basavanna's feet. When *Sama* (Negotiations), *Danda*(punishment), *upayas*(tricks) failed, Mahadeva Bhoopala started thinking : "What power is there in Basavanna? Why people are behind his principles?" The king was wonder struck by Basavanna's principles. He wanted to follow them. He relinquished his kingship and entrusted that to his son. He came along with his wife to Kalyana to lead a simple life. He adopted wood-cutting as his Kayaka (work).

The miracle of carrying 12000 Jangamas in a bag may be explained as follows: Both the priesthood and Kinghood grew together and were coexisted. King used to feed priests and saints. He also granted them lavishly. These religious persons had considered kings as extraordinary and divine personalities. Both-the Kindhood and the Priesthood used to enjoy common man's wealth. Religious leaders or hypocrites used to stay in the lavish shelter provided by the kings. During this period Basavanna's reformations became very famous. 'The practice of making them unemployed and nourishing them only to get praised is not desirable. It will be a sin for creating a group of people who are unemployed and lazy. Whoever it may be, they have to work. Whether he is Guru or a Jangama, he has to work. No one has right to eat without working. If any one eats other's earnings it is a crime. Whether physically or mentally they have to work.' It is quite possible that Basavanna had preached these thoughts to those Jangamas. This act of transforming the minds of those poeple might have been done by his missionaries or by himself. Then those Jangamas might have realised their instances, got dejected and became ready to sacrifice and perhaps might have followed Basavanna to Kalyana. There was a necessity of large people joining the movement to spread Basavanna's revolutionary ideals. When these people got involved in that service, they might have developed a sense of national consciousness, work consciousness, society consciousness and realised the responsibility of life. Therefore they must have developed a feeling not to go back to Sapadalaksha to lead the lazy life. Thus, the episode of carrying Jangamas in the bag of his heart like a legendary pied piper has been described as a special miracle in epics. From this description of the miracle, it is quite clear that Basavanna was attracting the people by his magnetic personality and valuable message without hypnotism, back-witch or any manthra.

Refusing to scan itself, this mind
All else will scan !
What shall I do with this mind of mine,
How shall I deal with it- this mind,
This feverish thing that will not trust,
Nor be devoted to the sharanas
Of Lord Lingadeva ?

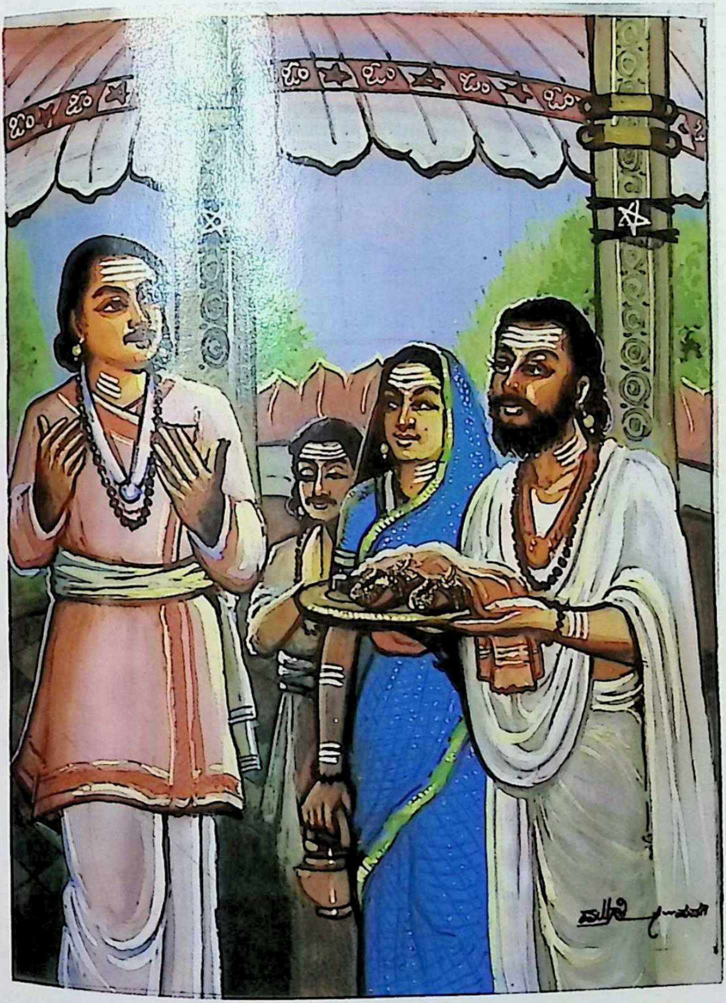
24. Revolution in Kalyana

Thus with these miracles of revolutionary ideals, he earned an invaluable fame, which others could not achieve during their life-time. Similar to a beautiful temple dressed up with a golden pinnacle, at the end of his life, a revolutionary incident occured. That is the Kalyana kranthi, (Revolution in Kalyana) the daring and the unique step in the history of India.

Quite often many revolutions have taken place in the history of the world. Usually, when some traditions beliefs, customs, practices, ideals are established in the society, community will raise against these and install superior ideals by displains them, thus, a movement bringing a overall transformation in the established norms and practices can be called revolution. These type of revolutions might have happened for the progress of social, political, economic ideals or for the overall development of ideals of life ; The revolution started by Basavanna during the 12th Century brought a tremendous overall transformation in the spheres of social, religious, economic, political, moral, radical and was sharp enough to change the angle of perception of the people. Though small in magnitude, with a tremendous fame, it had a broad vision of guiding the whole world.

The revolution of Kalyana happened neither for woman nor for wealth or land but to establish the equality of human being by wiping out the discrimination of colour and classes. In this, many have sacrificed. Any new principle counts into being only after many sacrifices. A legend goes like this; once after seeing the untruth and injustice in this world, a thinker became dejected and went in search of truth, who had sat in the form of a man. He sat down in distress as no one enquired about him though he was a truthful man. Then this truth seeker questioned ; "O truth, since you have come away from the human society, there is a lot of injustice and untruth. Why you should not come there? Why you should not improve it ? Then that truth answered. "O thinker ! I have not left this human society on my own, they have chased me. It is allright; I am prepared to come. But, are you ready to sacrifice yourself for me ? How many people are ready to sacrifice; their body, mind and wealth ?" This is really true. No ideals can be established in the society until the people make up their mind to sacrifice. That is why one of the leaders of 12th century revolution Shree Channa Basavanna has said,

Do you not bother that
The seed fallen on the soil
Has perished, but find it
In the harvest that shall come ;
Do you not bother that
The gold that is heated and melted
Has perished but find it
In its lustre yet to be ;
Do you not bother that
the light that is enkindled



Haralayya and Kalyanamma offering foot wear made out of their own skin new principle counts into being only after many sacrifices. A legend goes like this; once after seeing the untruth and injustice in this world, a thinker became dejected and went in search of truth, who had sat in the form of a man. He sat down in distress as no one enquired about him though he was a truthful man. Then this truth seeker questioned ; "O truth, since you have come away from the human society, there is a lot of injustice and untruth. Why you should not come there? Why you should not improve it ? Then that truth answered. "O thinker ! I have not left this human society on my own, they have chased me. It is allright; I am prepared to come. But, are you ready to sacrifice yourself for me ? How many people are ready to sacrifice; their body, mind and wealth ?" This is really true. No ideals can be established in the society until the people make up their mind to sacrifice. That is why one of the leaders of 12th century revolution Shree Channa Basavanna has said,

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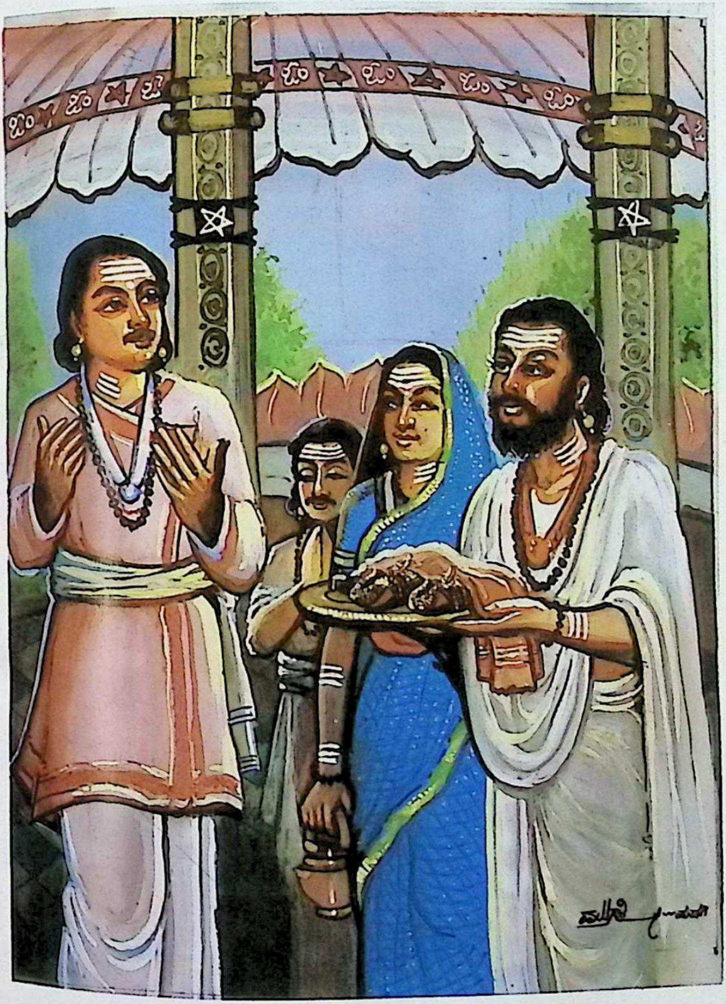


Haralayya and Kalyanamma offering foot wear made out of their own skin

BIRTHDAYS AND FESTIVALS OF THE FOLLOWERS OF THE BASAVA FAITH

1. Sharana mela to observe the birth of the Basava Religion - From January 12th.
2. Anniversary of the foundation of the Peetha of Mahajagadguru of Basava Religion - January 12th.
3. The Basava Revoulution Day and the Birthday of Siddarameswara - January 14th*.
4. Republic Day - January 26th*.
5. Lingaikya anniversary of Channabasavanna; Magha Hunnime (Carnival at Ulavi.)
6. Gana Mela Sarva Sharana's day SHIVARATHRI*.
7. Birthday of Her Holiness Mathaji - March 13th.
8. Birthday of Allama Prabhu Deva : UGADI Prathipada*.
9. Birthday of Akkamahadevi (Chaitra Hunnime of Davana).
10. Basava Jayanthi (Vyshakha Akshaya Thrutiya)*
11. Jayanthi of Madivala Machideva and Kayaka day. - May 1st*.
12. Lingaikya of His Holiness LInganananda Swamiji - June 30th.
13. Basava Panchami (Shravana Shuddha Panchami).
14. Neelamma Shasthi (Shravana Shuddha Shasthi).
15. Independence day*.
16. Jayanthi of His Holiness Lingananda Swamiji (Ganesha chouthi)*.
17. Gandhi Jayanthi - October 2nd*.
18. Day of Kalyana Kranthi (Mahanavami)*.
19. Basava Dharma Vijayotsav (Vijayadashami)* Akka Nagalambike Memorial day.
20. Kannada Rajyotsava - Novemeber 1st*.
21. Channabasava Jayanthi (Karthika Prathipada).

* Government Holidays

Has perished but find it
In the light that is to shine"

Only when a seed dies and gives out its fertility to the soil, another tree will be born. We get fruits from that tree. Then gold gets burnt and melted and stays with all patience, only then we get pure gold and from that different types of ornaments. We get light only when wick burns. Likewise in the revolution of 12 century, five wicks burnt themselves. By valiantly sacrificing their lives, they filled our mind with essence of ideals. Those immortal lights (Sharanas)-Samagara (cobbler) Haralaiah, his son Sheelavanthaiah, Brahmin minister Madhuvarasa, Haralaiah's wife-Kalyanamma & Madhuvarasa's daughter-Lavanyavathi.

Transformation

Haralayya's hut was situated in cobbler's colony of Kalyana nagara. Kalyanamma was his wife and Sheelavantha his only son. Theirs was a small and a ideal. family. They were interested in spiritualism from the beginning itself. They were eager to purify their lives by the grace of God. But there were no opportunities. Working day and night was the burden the society had bestowed on them. Hence, though desire for God has sprouted in them, it used to dry down due to lack of encouragement. "Being a paraiah why do you want to worship ? Become meritorius by working and serving for the upper caste. After many births you may born an upper caste. Then perhaps you get a path to salvation."

Their ambition was signed in these dischainful words. When many people like Kambali Nagideva, Madar Dhoolaiah and others were hurt and suffering these type of disgrace and discouragement, Basavanna's arrival to Kalyana took place. Anubhava Mantapa also started working. Then it started sending missionaries to all the places. Bahuroopi Chowdaiah, Echarikeya Muktinathanna and others started going to colonies of down trodden. During the free hours they used to deliver lectures in their colonies. Untouchables were quite scared due to the tradition that they should not be seen on the road when an upper caste person walks along the street and hence in the beginning they remained away from these lectures. But when Sharanas started calling them, standing in front of their houses with affection and love, they started coming out, Then these sharana's used to preach them ;" Every human being has 3 parts -body, mind and soul. Work is essential for body to live, But this is not the only aim. It is not sufficient if one eats and gets children. Animals also do this. Lectures, preachings, study of scriptures are essentials for the mind. For the development of this soul, worship and meditation are needed. All these should coexist. You should try to get that eternal joy. Basavanna says :

'People without aim and urge to seek God are equal to thousands of worms born in cowdung !'

Therefore you give a place for worship in your life." missionaries's preachings used to go on.

"That's right sirs...... but we are born untouchable, how can we worship God ?" one day a person asked.

"You should not say like that my brother.... you are all like other human beings ! There are no horns for the so called upper caste people and you do not have tail. All are born equally. Confidence should develop within you. The challenge of attaining that state should also develop in you. Basavanna says - O Lord, Almighty one who does not believe you is a holeya (an untouchable)' This word `holeya' is not an indicative of caste but an adjective..." That innocent person did not understand. He asked again...."

"My dear Sir.... we are the people who do low class jobs and carry dead animals. How can we, the inspire? people, worship God?

"My brother...... one who pains others mind, exploit other's house is impure. You people are innocent do not exploit others, do not cheat others. People who clean the villages by carrying dead animals are not low caste but service oriented people. Many people who call themselves as upper caste kill may people in the name of Yagnas and Yagas. We can call them violent people. Therefore you have an excellent opportunity. Open your eyes... Guru Basavanna, who is aspiring for our progress, says.....

"The man who slays is pariah
The man who eats the carrion is a low-caste person
Where is the caste here -where

Our Linga Deva's Sharana
Who loves all living beings,
He is the well born one !

The saying "Untouchable slays, low-caste person eats the carrion" is obsolutely wrong. It has become a caste symbol. The Person will be untouchable if he kills, in any manner, by action, thought or speech and undoubtedly he is a low caste person. Through what ever sense one might eat filth one is pariah, such fellows are found in any caste".

"If that is so, do we have an opportunity for religious initiation ? can we attain salvation in this birth? or is it a dream ?" asked Haralaiah with impassiated heart. The sharana politely answered ;

" In this very birth..... O revered sir, as the fruit of your worshipping, Lord Lingadeva is immediately in your hands. No jealousy in respect of virtue. The work you do will have its reward. Absolutely no room for doubt." Consider what Basavanna Says ;

There is one earth to hold
God's temple and the pariah colony
One water for the closet and the worship ;
One sect for those who know themselves ;
One community for those who are realised
By means of the six-fold mystic way
One stand for those who know thee, Lord Linga Deva.

What is needed for winning His grace is Bhakti" a gleam of joy danced on Haralaiah's face and an anticipating sense of fulfilment ran jubiliantly in his every vein. "If so, could you give initiation to me and my wife?"

"By all means" Haralaiah and his family thus joined Basavanna's Faith. Numerous others followed them, and started participating daily in the discussions of the Anubhava Mantapa. Observing the catholicity of outlook and the endearing sense of fraternity prevailing amongst the sharanas, and Basavanna's affection beyond compare and his perfectly ripened and integral personality that stood out privately here, they were simply captured by the Anubhava Mantapa. A gratified feeling of having accomplished something that was impossible and a sense of gratefulness could be seen reflected on the face of every one of them. Witnessing the deliberatious going on there in, thousands of others belonging to different castes became regular members of the Anubhava Mantapa.

Such a sense of gratitude pierced through and through every core of Haralaiah's body. By the unparalled adventure of Basavanna, the veritable guide in religious ways, the tide and current of tradition took a new direction. Haralaiah's life was overnight changed with alchemy.

In caste of pariah but not in his ways
knows its secret essence- the great sarana,
Haralaiah, dwelling in the city of Kalyana

After doing the dedicated work, pure and truthful and spending the remaining time in rendering service to

God and His saranas, meditation upon Him and in undergoing the Divine Experience he attained fulfilment;

Spending out his body, mind and money
And doing his family (Cobbler's) Kayaka
A mystic as well as a wreth of gems to the Siva faith

Sharanu Sharanarthi
(Twice Boweth)

Haralaiah, after getting the santification of Basava Dharma, daily pursued his honest and dedicated occupation. One day in the afternoon, "Jai Guru Basavesha Hara Hara Mahadeva" a loud voice was heard. The moment Haralaiah heard this, he was thrilled. That was the time Basavanna was returning to Mahamane after finishing the work at the royal court, for pooja and Lunch, But why is he coming this way on his horse? Lots of people gathered around him and started chanting loudly in praise of him. As though the more they met him the more eager to meet him, people would bow to Basavanna who appeared to him as an embodiment of their great fortune, greeting everybody in return, Basavanna was slowly coming with a smile on his face.

Haralaiah cameout deciding to offer in great devotion, his salutations to Basavanna with great reverence. Basavanna was coming with bent head and folded hands, would speak eloquently on his courtesy and affection, claded spotlessly, with his premier's headdress glittering in the sun and as though vying with it, his countenance radiant as the rising sun, his eyes warm and cheerful, his broad forehead anointed with vibhoothi was shining as though his mind's purity overflowed in profusion, he came riding on his milk-white horse. When he smiled ; all those around him irrespective of their age and sex, felt happy as if bathed in a shower of joy. When Haralaiah saw Basavanna thus coming on his horse, his heart was thrilled with love and admiration. He found in him, a fond mother, a considerate Guru and a loving brother and all these three rolled into one. He uttered in silence - Is it not because of this high-souled personality we are living like this atleast with a little bit of courage ? we are capable of Linga pooja and other meditations after receiving religious initiation. How to repay this enormous debt ?" When he was involved in this thought, Basavanna's disciple Sangaiah came in a hurry and said "Respected Sharana Haralaiah, today Guru is coming to your home to have food with you". Haralaiah was astonished. He almost moved to silence with joy, stood motionless.

" Kalyani, Sheelavantha, listen ! today Guru is coming to our home to have food with us !! My dear Kalyani, Sheelavantha how can I control this excitement ?" Haralaiah was immensely delighted, were no bounds to his joy.

They washed Basavanna's feet with great devotion and welcomed him. After the pooja Basavanna drank Ragi malt prepared by Kalyanamma and felt happy.

After this, he got ready to leave. Haralaiah was moved by Basavanna's simplicity, concern for the people and offered his salutations to him ; "Sharanu, my Lord, Basavanna". Haralaiah is standing in full of devotion. By looking at him, Basavanna too became happy. The society which he was struggling to build was taking a firm shape. He considered himself fortunate, he brought his two hands together and said "Sharanu Sharanarthi" (twice salutations to you) O Shivasharana Haraḷaiah". Basavanna alighted the horse. While Haralaiah rapt in his bhakti for Basavanna stood dumb like a pillar, the horse carrying the latter moved fast. Haralaiah without any external sensations, was thinking about the happened incidence. " O my Lord what a mistake ! I received twice salutations from Basavanna who gave us religious initiation. I have become indebted to him. I did not even roll falling on his feet". Thus, Haralaiah was thinking, Kalyanamma and Sheelavantha, who had come to see off Basavanna, were amused by Haralaiah's condition.

"Do Sharanas worry ? Is not the worry a character feature of illusion ?" Kalyani questioned Haralaiah.

"Kalyani, worry is neither about food nor clothes nor any thing else. It is about supreme truth. When we were not in a position to repay what Guru Basavanna has done to us, I am more indebted by receiving twice salutations". Kalyanamma also plunged into deep thought.

"Yes, it is true, he has given us rebirth, he is a Mahatma. On one hand he has given the religious equality for the downtrodden and also on the other hand was successfully given the religious equality to women. From these two angles we should not be indebted to him.... therefore we shall do one thing ; we shall dedicate a beautiful pair of shoes to him prepared using skin from your left thigh and my right thigh."

" Oh ! what a noble and divine idea Kalyani ! I am greatly satisfied by this idea..." uttered Haralaiah. He finished pooja and started working. They removed skin from their thigh and prepared a beautiful pair of shoes.

In the next day, by covering those shoes - the symbol of dedication- in care and devotion with a silk cloth, Haralaiah's family set out for Mahamane-Basavanna's residence while hundreds of people were visiting Mahamane to have a glimpse of Basavanna, Haralaiah was struken as he was hesitant to go on with his small gift and was standing outside. Basavanna's though eyes could not see the heart could and he came out and hugged him with great affection and welcomed Haralaiah. Haralaiah was shocked by this gesture." Is it possible for him to hug and welcome a pariah like me ? This caused him pain. But Basavanna, with a regretting smile, said "Haralaiah, still don't you know the essence of my principle whether he is a son of a Dasi or a son of prostitute. One should understand that after the initiation he is a devotee of shiva. The concepts of high or low is just an illusion. All are equal in the eyes of God. That which glitter in the eyes and the soul is nothing but the sentient of God ! If you can thwart off this mis-concept of low status and become bold with brimming confidence that would be a great fortune for me, please come !..." With great affection he took them inside. Basavanna was astonished by the beauty and artistic excellence of the shoes dedicated by Haralaiah" O Guru Basava, you are my father, mother and everything. You are the Mahatma and you have given us religion - God and initiation. I don't have suitable gift for such a great personality. But please accept these shoes with generosity as gift without rejecting them." With great humbleness he requested him "Respected Haralaiah even a grass given with devotion is equivalent to mountain ! then is it possible to reject these lovely shoes ? Allright! what skin is used to make these shoes ? Basavanna asked by observing them closely.

" O Mahatma please don't reject them by hearing the truth. These shoes have been made up of skin taken from my wife's left thigh and my right thigh..." Basavanna was terribly shaken and became unmoved by listening to these. "O my God what a terrible sacrifice ! Why did you resort to such an act ?" Though he became silent, he was immensed in emotions and he placed the shoes over his head.

"Sir, this earth does not stand up to the value of these shoes. The value of these can't be fixed even if the whole earth is weighed against these" uttered Basavanna"

" Haralaiah, these are the symbols of your dedication, sacrifice and great understanding and home the parts of the pure souls like yours".

"No one, not even me, should dare to wear this set; the shoes special should remain as the immortal symbol of sacrifice...." Basavanna returned the shoes by uttering these sentences and consoled Haralaiah and bid him farewell after dining with him.

Haralaiah's family was shocked by this, it coult not do anything, just started moving towards the house silently. At that time Madhuvarasa, a colleague in Basavanna's cabinet was coming on the way, He saw Haralaiah walking along the street emotionally. "Harala.... where are you going ? you are wandering in the Royal street with arrogance since you have become sharana. You people used to go away just seeing the shade of higher caste people, now you are walking without fear ?" Madhuvarasa roared in anger.

"Is it fault for us to walk on earth given by God holding this human form also given by Him....?

"Not a fault, not at all, it is the fault of the training given by that Basavanna...."while talking with impatience, Madhuvarasa saw the silken parcel on Haralaiah's head and also he observed, the Royal street on which Haralaiah's family coming from Mahamane and he asked "What is it ?"Haralaiah did not show it. But

Madhuvarasa snatched the packet with the help of body-guards. After seeing the shoes, he asked the cost of them. He did not listen to Haralaiah's plea that those shoes can't be sold for only earthy prize and he forcibly put on the pair howling with rage. The moment he put his feet on the shoes, through his entire body ran blazing irritation as though he was roasting in a pit of fire and fell unconscious. Body-guards took him home. Haralaiah terribly depressed, went home with the shoes.

Madhuvarasa's illness went on increasing. After hearing the news Basavanna started thinking seriously. "The disease, which has come to him because of disgrace to sharana, can be healed by his grace only"; and thus Basavanna decided. He gave suggestion that, Madhuvarasa should bathe in the water of Haralaiah's vat which he had used to prepare the shoes" Though this was not acceptable to Madhuvarasa, his daughter Lavanyavathi came to know about this and prepared a plan to bring water from that vat. She did not send the servant Lakumayi to Tripuranthaka pond to get water but she herself went to Haralaiah's house and begged for water. Haralaiah initially hesitated fearing any untoward consequences. But after he convinced himself that it was the suggestion by Basavanna, he poured water from his vat to Lavanya's pot. Lavanyavathi carried the water and arranged for Madhuvarasa's bath. Then Madhuvarasa after finishing bath, stepped into pooja room, he noticed tremendous change in his condition and he was greatly surprised. Then he called his daughter "Lavanya, Lavanya" Lavanya began sweating out of fear"

" My God.... my father would have smelt a vat. Who knows how much he will roar with fury ? What shall I say in answer ?" She began thinking as she slowly stepped into the room and stand with her head bent not daring to look at him.

"From where did you bring water my dear daughter? asked Madhuvarasa. His curiosity and smoothness could be obviously felt in his voice. Unable to understand her silence, he asked with added anxiety,

"Don't tell a lie, daughter, tell me the truth."

"My father, I went to Haralaiah's house and begged his pardon on your behalf and then brought water from the vessel in which he sinks his leather in. Father, I could not bear to see you agony. If I have done anything wrong, forgive me, dear father. Madhuvarasa got up at once.

"Is it so, daughter, my dear daughter?" According her and holding her hands, he added ;

"Lavanya, you are not just my daughter but one who has given me a new life. You saved me like mother, from this incurable ailment". So saying, he lovingly pressed her hands on his eyes with due respect.

Madhuvarasa realised Haralaiah's spiritual power and repented for his arrogant attitude. In the very next day he went to Haralaiah's house with his family and begged his parden.

"Whatever happens, I believe happens for the good. Thereby my eye of conscience has opened, the pride of caste has smashed, I could understand the height of your greatness. Please, kindly accept my humble gifts." The attendants, placing five plates in front of Haralaiah removed the cover. The plates were full of golden coins and ornaments, costly clothes and brocades for Kalyanamma. Haralaiah smiled and said.

"Madhuvarasa Sir, this poor man's hut is not able to protect them. I am ever grateful to you for your generosity. What shall I do with them, Please ?" Gently voicing forth his feelings, Haralaiah kept silent.

"You could end your poverty!" suggested Madhuvarasa's subordinate, who accompanied his master.

" When God is there, ever vigilent to protect us.... we have no poverty at all. We accept nothing except the fruit of true and pure Kayaka or dedicated labour. For us, Basava's followers, to hoard more than we need is a grave sin." Madhuvarasa was surprised.

"You at least, my great mother, kindly accept these brocades and make me happy".

"Excuse me, O Madhuvarasa Sir, your heart is too magnanimous! I do not wear anything except the cloth woven of self-spun yarn. In the afternoon it is a habit with us, all the women of this colony to assemble and speak of yesterday's deliberations of the Anubhava Mantapa. As we talk we spin yarn on the wheel and we all wear the produce of that yarn".

"How splendid... before these sharana's wealth of self-content these golden ornaments and rich brocades look less than a straw's worth !" exclaimed Madhuvarasa in his mind.

"Should I carry them back ?" His disappointed voice was understood by a subordinate officer.

"Your Excellancy, they can be as well distriburted, to the people of this colony."

Haralaiah smiled and said. "Kindly do not take it to heart, O Sharanas ; people of our colony never accept anything save the fruit of their true, pure and dedicated labour, make a test if you wish."

"Good God.... today I came to know that even gold and jewels could be worthless!" exclaimed Madhuvarasa.

Then Madhuvarasa, with great humility and humbleness requested Haralaiah to accept another gift.

"Could you not accept my daughter Lavanyavathi for Sheelavantha and ennoble my caste ?"

"Save me, Basava, my Basava, what a demand !" Haralaiah was astounded. All who were standing around had a shocking experience of being struck by a bunch of thunder bolts, as it were all at once. This relation was not only special but was revolutionary marriage in the subcontinent. While Madhuvarasa was at the highest strata of this Varnashrama Society, Haralaiah was at the lowest strata. And the possible marriage between these two strata was going to create a terrible havoc in the society. Therefore Haralaiah hesitated. But, Madhuvarasa as a follower of Sharana Dharma, he placed his request before Anubhava Mantapa. It was accepted by Basavanna and all other Sharanas agreed to this marriage. When Haralaiah got this approval, he also agreed to this wedding. Marriage took place without any problems.

Shall I Call Siriyala a man of trade,
And Machayya a washer man ?
Call Kakkayya a tanner, and
Chennayya a cobbler
And if I call myself a priest, will not
Lingadeva just laugh at me ?

25. Orthodoxy Revolted

The news of the marriage soon spread throughout the kingdom of Kalyana like a wild fire. The orthodoxy began to discuss over it. The marked advance of the Lingayat religion, coming of the in throngs from distant countries and settling as its followers in the city of Kalyana, the dwindling of the number of visitors to temples and other centres of worship, absence of those people consulting astrologers and almanacs, gradually people losing faith in the worship of nine planets done by priests and offering them gifts ; all these enraged the orthodoxy. The reactionary traditionalists branding this as anti-religion and anti-divine, they carried a complaint to the King. Consequently the architect of this revolution Basavanna was asked explanation.

Basavanna put forward his argument for equality on the basis of tradition and self-experience. He convinced the king that varna and caste were not created by God but by man. The reactionary traditionalists who were jittering with fright due to Basavanna's ability to analyse and argue on the basis of social obligation, said "O respected king why all these arguments ? Basavanna is a scholar and Mahatma. He has a best suitable personality for the post of prime minister. In order to be a prompt and honest officer, let him give up completely the activities of Anubhava Mantapa, revolutionary work, mass awakening and other crazy activities like visiting pariah colony etc.," "Yes, yes respected Basavanna you may do so ! With this you can concentrate more on your work...."Bijjala also suggested.

Basavanna smiled and said : "What is the use of a lion with broken waist ? What is the use of an elephant with broken trunk ? What is the use of a soldier running away from the battle field ? Similarly, what is the use of a position which can't create religious, social and moral awareness ? Therefore my inner conscience does not agree to this power which does not render itself to service."

"Is it a better service to include distressed and lowcaste people than rendering service to the great king and earning his favour ? Is it a big achievement to mix hundreds of castes and call them Sharanas ?" Konde Manchanna questioned.

Basavanna answered seriously, "O King Bijjala, this casteism is a curse on our country. It is inhuman and heinous to attach low and high status to people on the basis of birth. A person has to be evaluated on the basis of personality, principle and character. I am dreaming of that beautiful, ideal and noble state. I don't have any ambition except marching towards that goal "

" Your majesty, Basavanna's foresight has gone very deep. Is it so easy for him to take off his eyes from the throne? The task of organising the people is in this direction only to fulfil this purpose" Konde Manchanna accused Basavanna.

"Oh, my God! what a terrible accusation your majesty ! I don't have an ambition of longing for this piece of land. Long ago, I have realised that it is meaningless to fight for woman, land and money. When this accusation is made on me, I can't continue in the position. Please accept my resignation." Basavanna started removing the Royal symbols -crown and the sword. But Bijjala prevented Basavanna.

"Basavanna.... what are you doing !?"

Don't !..... don't be impulsive, don't take a precipitative step, please..." His throat was choked with grief.

"Your majesty, whereever I go, I will be a servant of this Land. Even without occupying any position I shall serve this country with my heart and mind together. Please give me permission "

Bijjala became helpless. Basavanna quietly started moving towards Mahamane after renouncing the position.

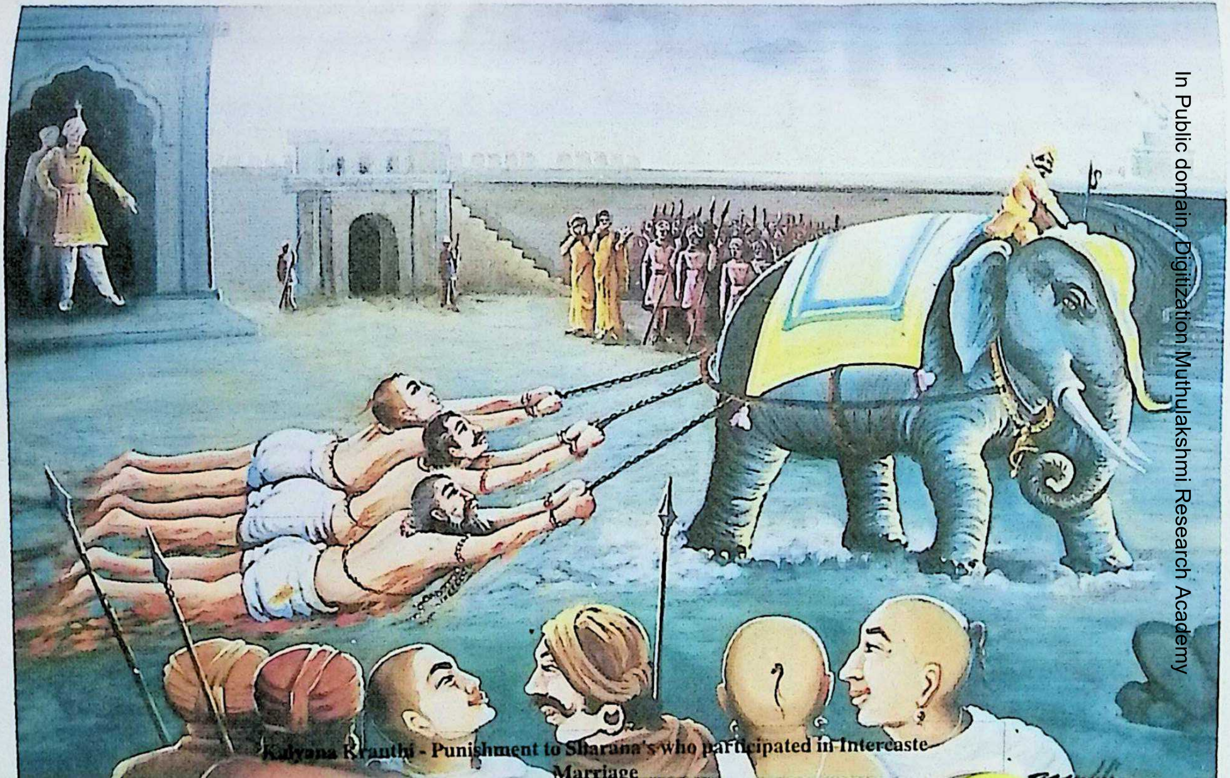
Still backbiter's mind was not in peace. "If Basavanna stays back in Kalyana even after renouncing the position, your majesty, people may raise in revolt. Therefore it is safer for your throne if you banish him immediately." Konde Manchanna and Naranakramitha gave suggetions to Bijjala. Bijjala fell pray to this machinations and sent banish order to Basavanna.

Before sunrise, Basavanna left Kalyana and crossed the main door of the fort by accepting the banish order given by the king, who did not even have an independent thinking due to his vulnerability to fall prey to machinations of the fraudulent people. He gave the responsibility of protecting the Sharanas and Vachana literature to Channabasavanna and Madivala Machideva and told them to save the innocent Sharanas from injustice. All the *Sharanas* bade farewell to him. That was the second day of Phalguna month of Rakshasanama Samvatsara [1196 A.D].

The *Sharanas* were deeply grieved as they were bidding farewell to the fortune of Kalyana. His journey was towards Kudala Sangama where he had spent his lovely childhood.

When Bijjala, losing his balance of mind, gave Manchanna and Narana Kramitha the power to decide on the matter, Haralaiah, Madhuvarasa and Sheelavantha were sentenced to death. The very next day Basavanna left Kalyana, *Sharanas* were arrested and tried. The innocent and holy sharanas were accused of blasphemy and their eyes were plucked off. Later, arguing that the Sharanas were not confessing their sin, they were tied to legs of elephant and killed on the fourth day of Phalguna month. People were grieved by this inhuman act of Bijjala. Jagadeva, Mallanna and Bommanna loyal patriots of Chalukyan Empire, who were enraged by the usurping activity of Bijjala, stabbed and killed the King on the full moon day.

The *Sharanas* who were inhumanly executed be-



Kalyana Kranthi - Punishment to Sharana's who participated in Intercaste Marriage

SHARANA MELA

AT KOODALA SANGAMA ON THE OCCASION OF BASAVA KRANTHI DAY.

12th, 13th, 14th and 15th January every year.

Dear Members of the Sharana Fraternity,

It is a very essential that the devotees of Basava, the great humanist, the great prophet and the universal teacher the admirers of Basava's teachings and philosphy, the followers of Basava religion and the lingavanthas to meet in a holy congregation at least once a year. The first historical Sharana mela was held at Koodala Sangama - the place where Basavanna studied, meditated, attained Lingaikya - on 14, 15 and 16th January in 1988 with the purpose that it will promote equality and fraternity. This historical first Sharana mela attracted more than four lakh people. The who congregation performed mass prayer as if it was competing with the surging waves of the completely filled the Basava Sagara.

This type of Sharana mela will be held on January 12, 13, 14 and 15th every year. Many eminent personality including, main pntifs of different Mutts, writers and others participate in the mela and delive lectures. Koodala Sangama - the place of Basavann's lingaikya - is the religious centre for followers of Basava Religion just similar to Mecca as religious centre for Muslims and Amritsar as a religious centre for sikhs. You all come with the feeling of fraternity in lakhs together to this holy place.

ARRIVAL OF SHARANAS IS REJUVENESCE TO US.

came the martyrs and symbol of sacrifice in the Revolution and eternal stars in the Vachana literature and are depicted in folk songs as follows:

Becoming a shower of flowers,
Riding a carriage made of flowers,
Becoming flowers themselves for Siva's feet
They joined the holy garland of Sivasharanas !

Low caste Haralaiah became the gifted Sharana
The Lord Shiva blessed him in appreciation and took him
There grew a sandle tree

On Shiva's mountain
Two parrots sat on the crown and
sang the story of Haralaiah ||

Thus, goes the folk songs.

Shun, Man, this mortal greed....
The splendour of the moonlight night
Will never stay ; the only estate
That does not perish, is
Not to forget to adore
Lord Lord Lingadeva

26. Sublimation of Camphor

That was the Fifth day of *Shudha Shravana*. In the serene hour of dawn, after a dip in the confluence of Krishna and Malaprabha, Basavanna was meditating just concentrating with his inwinking gaze upon Ishtalinga. He heard an order from God that his responsibility on the earth was over and he should join Him. Basavanna decided to leave this mortal world and merge into the Absolute Void;

Lord, through oblivion of the past
I Came into this world :
As in your play and sport you pulled the strings,
I sang and danced
A lakh and six-and-ninety thousand songs ;
By placing me in the communion of saints
Called Service ; by putting me
Against Bijjala, man of alien faith,
And making me rub with him,
To show how great thy grace ;
By making me raise to life again
Three hundred and sixty dead lives.
Making me win against
Six and thirty slanders;
Blessing my eightyeight miracles :
Serving me what was left of offerings
Made to the great ones of this mortal world :
You saved me.
Your saints being pleased,
By grace of Prabhudeva, who effaced
My taints, I came in contact with *Pranlinga*
The work thou sent me for is over now :
O Lord Linga Deva !
Hail ! make me one with thee

Basavanna was taking a restrospective view of his life. He came as it were, with God's ordain and accordingly gave a doctrine of equality against social inequality based on caste. And with a view to demonstrate the power of the Divine grace he performed some miracles. When his destined work was over, why should he continue to exist on this mortal world ?

His heart was so tender and all embracing that he was not prepared to condemn or curse even Bijjala who had behaved at the end abominably and obnoxiously but believed, on the contrary, that all the hurdles cast by him were not harmful but purposeful. From the point of view of his entire life, it was his firm conviction that all that occured was for some good. That is why he regarded Bijjala as a touchstone which would reveal the worth of his own personality. This is explicit in his words addressed to Lord Almighty: "In order to exhibit yourself the majesty of your own power you made me confront with Bijjala of another faith and fight against him". Thus he deemed Bijjala to have come by God's will to ennoble his life. This attitude of Basavanna reminds us of the last words of Jesus, "Father, forgive them ; for they know not what they do" (St.Luke 23-24) of those who had crucified him. Basavanna seems to have gone a step further than Jesus. For the former, without regarding the injuries done by Bijjala to be an offence, reveals "O God, it is you who have sent Bijjala to test me and exhibit the majesty of your power" and thus leaves to God the responsibility of passing judgement.

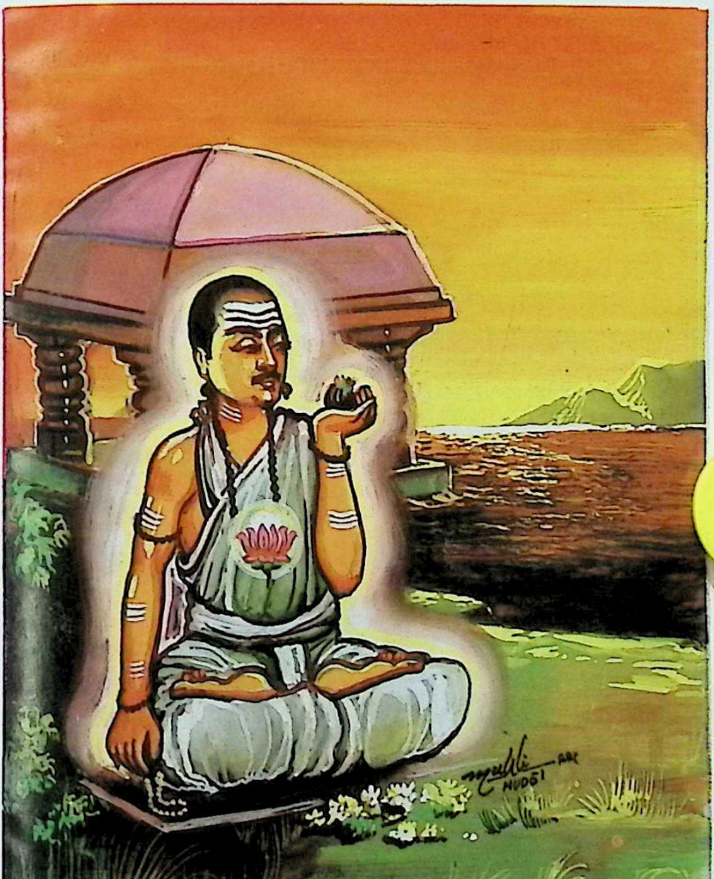
Basavanna seeks to give up the mortal body voluntarily and most joyously ; as may be noted in his words ;

"You brought me among creatures born
Of pain of several births,
I can no more be born, nor die
I have escaped both birth and death
I have performed the mission that you bade
Now hug me to your heart
O Lord Lingadeva !

When Creator sent me down,
I built a great house (Mahamane) upon the earth,
As drudge and servant to the Sharanas
I spent myself, and lived.
Now that my maker's bidding bids me go
To come again, I offer humble thanks
For Lord Lingadeva's command.

The incarnation of the body again perished
Through the movement of the soul,
And when the sense of I dried up,
The sense of Lord Linga Deva
was turned to oneness in Him"

One should not construe that forgaving one's body voluntarily means suicide. It means giving up one's mortal body at one's own pleasure by Yogic means, which is not suicide at all. A suicide is generally the outcome of a desperate frustration in life or reluctance to encounter life's difficulties. Whereas the other, of an intense longing to be one with the Divine through yogic



Lord Basava merging with God on the 5th day of Shravana at Kudala Sangama

" It has not been possible for me to practise all the precepts of Basaveswara which he taught 800 years ago and which he also practised. I have adopted a few of them. I am yet a seeker in this aspect and not an accomplised one. Eradication of untaouchability and dignity of labour were amoung his core precepts. One does not find even shades of casteism in him.

Had he lived during our times, he would have been a saint worthy of worship. If you, his followers, practise his precepts, you could uplift not just Bharat but the world."

Mahatma Gandhiji,
Father of the Nation
exhortation at the 1924 Belgaum Congress Session.

"The Welfare of all living beings is the Mission of Divine Man, Love and Compassion are the basis of True Religion."

- Lord Basaveswara

meditation of trance. Basavanna prays ;

"Does camphor in the fire have soot?
Does water in the mirage have mire ?
Does perfume which the wind has hugged grow stale ?
When Thou hast loved me fully, can there be
Rebirth for me ? O Lord Linga Deva
Absorb me, Lord, within
The Lotus of Thy feet !

The sense of 'I' being completely dried up, he now witnesses everywhere the spirit of the cosmic infinity. As long as he was conscious, he adored, worshipped, extrolled and sang the praises of the Divine. But both consciousness and forgetfulness being no more, his will being emptied of its content, he has now realised his Self, and now eternally abiding in Almighty Lord, finds that highest spirit everywhere and himself in that spirit. When such longing has seized him within and without, that light of all lights which surpasses the splendour of a billion suns and moons possesses him. He sings with joy;

"Between the earth and sky was born
A mango tree ; two boughs it had,
Three leaves and six and thirty flowers,
And but a single fruit, which when was filled
with juice, nothing I saw ;
when the leaves dropped,
The stem loosening, the fruit fell,
Prabhudeva, eating that fruit,
Vanished into the Absolute.
Because I got Prabhu's merciful grace,

Lord Linga Deva, saying "come here" kept me
Within the Lotus of His heart".

"Upon the soil of devotion
Sprouted Guru, the seed,
And Linga, the Leaf, was Born ;
Then knowledge came as the flower,
And virtuous practice tender fruit,
And enlightment for the ripened one
And when the fruit of enlightment detached
From the stalk and fell,
Look, Lingadeva, wanting it for Himself.
Picked it up."

The ripple of Naada, the soul-spirit, deserting the body, was lost in the Void. The door of the *Paschima Chakra* being opened, big volume of light rushed out and was lost in the Void. Transfiguring the form into the formless, the Soul into the Transcendent soul and losing himself in utter silence and penetrating the heart lotus of Almighty Lord, he vanished into the Void of voids.

The Ashramites rushed to the spot. Basavanna was sitting as though lost in the bliss of consubstantial union of Anga (Soul) and Linga (God). All the ten airs being stilled in the thousand petalled lotus, his eye was rested in *Brahma randhra* (Sahasrara). The final dirge was just about to end when Machideva returned with the news of Kalyana and stood motionless, shocked by seeing Basavanna's Lingaikya. He sung passionately with great devotion:

"Rendering the clothes you wore, you have
Departed from this life, Basavanna !
Doffing the shoes you donned, you have
Departed from this life, Basavanna !
Untying the tuft you tied, you have
Departed from this life, Basavanna !
Skipping all boundaries and bonds, you have
Departed from this life, Basavanna !
Not even touching what made for Linga,
You have departed, O Basavanna !
Holding within your hands the piety
You rendered to Jangama, you have
Departed from this life, Basavanna !
Donning the light, you have become the Void, Basavanna!
Show me the path
Where I may say
Hail to Basavanna "

Yes, of course, Basavanna left unexpectedly not even touching what was made for Linga. Without eating the food made ready, he, just as he was sitting for worship, gave up his mortal body. Within a short while, after his spirit had merged into the Universal spirit, Nilamma, who accompanied Hadapada Appanna, came to know that Basavanna had bidden adieu to his mortal life. Standing on the bank of the river Krishna she gazed with her eyes. Her longing to have the sight of her husband was no doubt keen and intense. But, what could she do after everything was over ? Instead of striving to see his body, why should not she witness his spirit in the mirror of her Istalinga ? She felt it and asked herself, "Is not the Almighty, who is there, here too ? Is it worthy of the great souls to have the illusion of here and there?" And immediately having a dip in the Krishna sat on the bank for the worship of Linga. Just as Basavanna, already merged in the Supreme, his form appeared in the mirror of her Ishtalinga, she too lost herself with an ineffable joy in the Linga. Not only did Basavanna and Nilamma, the one regarding his wife as mother, her husband as son, conquered Kaama- the faculty of lust but through death at pleasure also Kaala- the faculty of death, who vanquishes everybody in the world. Having achieved this they became immortals.

With Basavanna merging with the supernal light ended the story of Kalyana. But it is not a permanent end, it ended with an announcement of the play to be staged next day. The story commenced in the heart of every follower of his. In one way Basavanna failed and succeeded in another way, as Maharshi Tagore puts it "he failed as the Buddha failed, as Jesus failed, as Socrates failed" He succeeded in the sense that he gave an abiding social doctrines which can unify the entire humanity in one bond. As though putting powerful-weapon into the hands of a coward, he left his doctrine with the society which was still, not mature enough to use it. Though in the relentless fight between truth and tradition, he seemed to have temporarily met with defeat ; he tried to inculcate in men and women an unswearing confidence in life and an unfading faith in principles. He neither offered *bhakti* in the borrowed light of blind imitation nor let others offer it instead, he taught men and women how to think independently and attain in its light, their life's fulfilment. He sacrificed himself for the overall freedom of the mankind. Leaving a great message that can be a guide unto all times and climes, he became immortal and was thus victorious. As a stream born in the heart of the mountains growing wider and wider as it proceeds in the plains, ultimately joins the sea, even so this stream of the Basavanna's message flows on, lending men and women of the world an optimistic faith in their life and confidence in their strength and ability to mould their future. Some day it shall help to bring about humanity's salvation and fulfilment. On that day, perhaps the world will realise the worth and majesty of Basavanna and pay its ungrudging homage to him. May we learn to pray for the advent of such an age of rational thinking and right reasoning and put a full-stop to the present story with the following lines taken from Kannada folklore;

"Basavanna of Kalyana knows everything ;
He has brought and scattered God's light
Throughout the land
people sing raising their voice ||
The manthra tilled and sown;
The manthra sown and grown.....
True shiva-manthra is your name, Basavayya
The mantra for our lives upon
This mortal earth ||
Leader of the (Kayaka) work culture is Basavayya

Prophet of new religion and became shivabhakti
And heralded the new life style ||
Basava is the seed of Bhakti and
Basava is the light of salvation
Basava is the main seed of Kayaka
And Basava is the Omkara for Shiva path ||
We salute you till our lives go
Please bless us Basavayya |
Bless us for everything ||

* Kudala Sangama *

* Kudala Sangama Sukshetra is in Bagalkot District, Hungunda Taluka, at the confluence of two big rivers Krishna and Malaprabha.

* It is just 8 Kms from Sangam cross on the National Highway No.13. Hungunda, Ilkal, Bagalkot are nearby towns and many buses ply from these places to Kudala Sangama.

* Kudala Sangama is an Old Shaiva Kshetra menmentioned in Shivapuranas, Sri Sangameswara being the main deity. In 12th century this holy place shone with full glory, with a big educational centre of Kalamukha tradition.

* It is here Lord Basava, the great prophet and social reformer got educated, had revelation and prepared the blue print of a new religion. Later on it is here he spent his last days and became lingaikya-merged with God.

* Sri Sangameswara Temple, Lord Basaveswara's holy Samadhi (Aikya Mantap), Basava Dharma Peetha's Mahamane Campus are the places worth seeing.

* On the other side of the river Krishna is the holy samadhi of the lady saint Neelambike, wife of Sri Basaveswara.

|| Om Sri Guru Basavalingaya Namaha ||

SIX MAIN TENETS OF

LINGAYAT RELIGION

1. **Founder Prophet-** Lord Basavanna, who preached equality of mankind.
2. **Religious Scripture-** Vachana literature that preaches fatherhood of God and brotherhood of man.
3. **Religious Object of Worship-** Istalinga a dark polished hyperbola symbolising the cosmic soul God, worn on body and worshipped.
4. **Religious Centre-** Kudala Sangama, the holy place where Lord Basavanna became one with God.
5. **Religious Flag-** Satsthala Dhwaja with Guru Basava's sacred chant in a six angled star.
6. **Aim of the Religion-** Kalyana Rajya Nirmana building up of casteless and classless society on this earth.

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Her Holiness Mathe Mahadevi was born in 1946 at Chitradurga in Karnataka. After getting bachelor degree in science and Masters degree in Philosophy, she got initiation from His Holiness Lingananda Swamiji in 1966. While delivering a lecture at Mysore, out of intuition, she declared that she would be founding Mahila Jagadguru Peetha. This declaration, being upheld by H.H. Lingananda Swamiji, culminated in the establishment of the peetha. H.H. Swamiji declared H.H. Mathaji as the first pontif of that peetha and she became the first Mahila Jagadguru.

She has a rare combination of a gifted writer and a famous orator. Sofar, she has written more than 100 books and a number of poems. Her first novel ***Heppitta Haalu*** has won the state Sahitya Academy award. Her magnum opus ***Tarangini*** (life story of the great saint Akkamahadevi) has seen many reprints. Her other famous works include *Basavatatwa Darshana, Who is Hindu?, Hand book of Lingayath Religion* and so on.

Her talks have transformed many lives here and abroad. Her successful foreign tour in 1980's has won her many accolades. Her firm belief in the lagical and rational thinking has made her a revolutionary religious leader in the annals of modern human history.

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